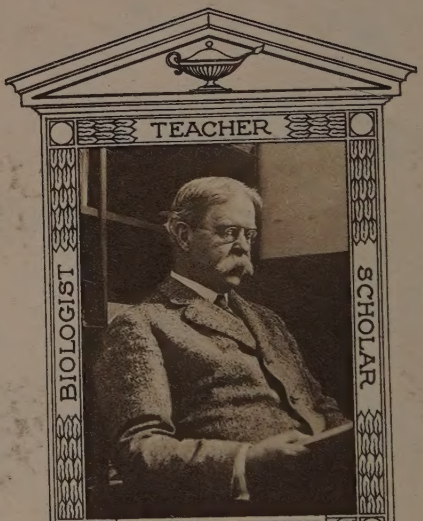

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NEWTON: HIS FRIEND: AND HIS NIECE.

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NEWTON:

HIS FRIEND: AND HIS NIECE.

BY THE LATE

AUGUSTUS DE MORGAN.

EDITED BY

HIS WIFE, AND BY HIS PUPIL,
ARTHUR COWPER RANYARD.

(See Encyc. Brit. 9th ed., last sentence of article on De Morgan)

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THIS little volume has been enlarged from the size of an article written, in 1858, for *The Companion to the Almanac*. It was the last of a series contributed by Mr. De Morgan, and was rejected by Mr. C. Knight, the editor, who thought that the question discussed in it would not be held generally interesting.

A reference to this article, the grounds for its rejection, and a letter, treating of the relative duties of editors and contributors, will be found on p. 264 of the memoir of Augustus De Morgan (Longman and Co., 1882).

The original MS. was revised, and received some additions, in the years 1864—6. And, later still, on the accession of new evidence, it was enlarged to the form in which it now appears; containing fresh information on the question of Catherine Barton, and on the laws relating to marriage.

It is needless to say that the justification of Newton in the matter of his niece's marriage was not, in the writer's estimation, merely a subject for literary or

historical gossip. His intense reverence for Newton would have given way before the clear conviction of a grave defect in moral character. He had been compelled to admit the culpable weakness, to call it by the mildest name, of Newton's conduct to Flamsteed; but a continued countenancing of immorality, by which he was supposed to be himself the gainer, would have been, in my husband's view, enough to darken even Newton's intellectual brightness. He believed, however, that the suspicion of this had been cleared away; and the arguments which led to this belief are placed before the reader. The question is not an unimportant one to those who hold moral excellence to be of more value than intellectual power, and who are sometimes apt to believe the possession of the one implies that of the other. If these readers find the evidence now brought forward strong enough to set the question of Newton's acquiescence in wrong-doing at rest, they will be better satisfied to leave the philosopher in his niche of undisputed greatness.

Sophia Elizabeth De Morgan.

NEWTON: HIS FRIEND: AND HIS NIECE.

THE subject of the following treatise, hitherto confined to the pages of the *Notes and Queries* or to Sir David Brewster's 'Life of Newton' and its reviewers, is worth wider circulation than it can obtain in a vehicle of learned discussion and antiquarian research, or in a large work and the criticism on it. A mere casualty afterwards threw an important piece of evidence in my way; and other such casualties might possibly occur, if the circumstances were more generally known. A very curious letter, containing an allusion which must instantly have struck anyone who had the requisite knowledge as deciding the question, remained useless until 1856; other letters, or documents of other kinds, equally to the point, may be in existence, and equally unknown.

I have lengthened this paper by many digressions on collateral points, and have punctuated my title accordingly: the colons denote that the paper contains matters relative to the parties separately, as well as to their connexion. These offshoots may attract attention and

may lead to evidence. Should anyone object to this accumulation of details, I remind him that he may skim or skip. Little matters, which give or revive knowledge of the times, are very useful additions ; the smallest of them may be a clue.

For nearly a century and a half there has existed a smothered rumour, derived from contemporary assertions which it has been customary to keep out of history, that the niece of the great Isaac Newton, the beautiful and accomplished Catherine Barton, the 'famous witty Miss Barton,' was the mistress of Charles Montague, Earl of Halifax, Newton's old and close friend, and at last his political patron. There are neither frequent nor decided allusions to this rumour in biographies of Newton: some very difficult recorded circumstances give it a strong air of truth, and might have led to a suspicion that Newton had connived, it being known that his connection with Halifax suffered no interruption. That Newton actually did connive, and was rewarded by the gift of a public post, was asserted in one of the most notorious scandal-books of the day—a well-known and widely read production, and not proceeding from an anonymous writer, but from a lady who, though she had not character, had position and acquaintance with public men. The fact of the statement having been made during the life of Halifax I take to have been unknown to the biographer; if known, it was suppressed. And the most authentic account of Halifax which exists contains the statement that Catherine Barton was the superintendent of his

domestic affairs, and calls her a widow, which it is certain she was not.

Though the character of Newton in the social relations was above impeachment, and his life of the utmost strictness, the suppressors (if wilful suppression there were) probably felt that, as to the reign of Queen Anne, and a generation who had been boys and girls under Charles II., it was not quite conclusive to argue from what a man was to denial of his having been compelled by the state of society to countenance some of its irregularities. The utmost biographers ventured on, previously to recent discussion of the subject, was the statement that Montague was deeply attached to Catherine Barton, and that the circumstances which prevented their union are not known.

It was not only in England that the scandal gained circulation. Voltaire spread it through Europe in the most offensive form. He was no opponent nor maligner of Newton, but a fervent admirer and the writer who first drew the attention of France to the theory of gravitation. In 1765, in the 'Lettres Philosophiques' (Letter 21),* he says: 'I thought in my youth that Newton made his fortune by his merit. No such thing. Isaac Newton had a very charming niece, Madame

* 'J'avais cru, dans ma jeunesse, que Newton avait fait sa fortune par son extrême mérite. Je m'étais imaginé que la cour et la ville de Londres l'avaient nommé par acclamation grand maître des monnaies du royaume. Point du tout. Isaac Newton avait une nièce assez aimable, nommée Madame Conduit; elle plut beaucoup au grand trésorier, Halifax. Le calcul infinitésimal et la gravitation ne lui auraient servi de rien sans une jolie nièce.'

Conduit, who made a conquest of the minister Halifax. Fluxions and gravitation would have been of no use without a pretty niece.' The last biographer of Newton (Sir D. Brewster) declares that Voltaire 'makes no insinuation against the character of Miss Barton.' This I refer to those who know Voltaire's writings, and have learnt his manner. The insinuator, it will be observed, represents the niece as a married woman; and when a Frenchman of his day, without any explanation, describes a man as getting a place through the friendship of a minister for his married niece, he means more than the simple words imply.

Voltaire was in England during Mrs. Conduit's life; he was here three years at least, and left in 1728. The answer to his stinging innuendo, so far as concerns Newton's place at the Mint, lies in a couple of dates, which show that Newton got his post while his niece was a child; and in the further information, that her uncle never had a tenement of his own, except the old Manor House at Woolsthorpe and a set of rooms in college, until his office at the Mint brought him to London. But this answer *was not given*. The reason undoubtedly was that biographers felt it worse than useless to answer only a part. They saw there was something inexplicable about the matter, which it would perhaps be as well to let alone. A lurking belief that Voltaire had insinuated what was substantially true was not at all uncommon, though hardly ever expressed in print. People saw—that is, all who read about the matter—that the biographers *culled* their conclusions;

they admitted the attachment of Montague to Catherine Barton, and rejected the connection between them, though every evidence of the first fact was accompanied by exactly the same evidence of the second.

But the belief in some sort of connivance, infrequent and undefined, never made any head against the total unbelief inspired by Newton's moral life and moral reputation. Amidst all the controversies about his scientific treatment of scientific opponents, his life has stood without impeachment, and his reputation without stain. Biographers have probably been fully persuaded that, happen what might in the way of discovery, Newton would be found faultless. Therefore, they seem to have inferred, 'Let well alone.' They ought to have shown their faith by a most searching examination. A lawyer, of more than fifty years' experience in cases civil and criminal, before whom I put an abstract of the case, pronounced that there must have been a marriage if there were one decent person among the three—Newton, friend, and niece. We might almost draw the same conclusion from the certainty that both the slanderer and the eulogist of Catherine Barton, in print and at the time, make the uncontradicted statements that she lived in the house of Lord Halifax, and from our knowing that the friendship of Newton and Halifax suffered no diminution.

The reserve of biographers about the illustrious dead is a very unwise proceeding. There is another instance of it by which, had additional presumptions in favour of Newton been wanted, they might have remained want-

ing. Newton had a half-nephew (his nephews and nieces were all of the half-blood, his mother's grandchildren), Benjamin Smith (born about 1700, rector of Linton-in-Craven, 1743-1776), one of the most marked specimens of a profligate clergyman at a time when such specimens were more frequent than now by at least twenty to one, to speak charitably of past time; and so notorious in early youth, that his ordination produceed —even at that time—what Warburton (afterwards bishop) called a 'furious scandal.' And it is a queer illustration of the time that Dr. Stukeley, who thus underwent Warburton's rebuke for giving B. Smith a title, answered that he had refused him a testimonial, and had only given him a *title*, which had reference to his *support*, and not to *his morals*. And Warburton was pacified by this version of the matter, even to the extent of congratulating Dr. Stukeley on the goodness of his justification! (*Notes and Queries*, 2nd Ser., iii. 41.)

To this nephew, when a very young man, Newton wrote in such plain terms as his conduct justified, describing his haunts and his practices in language which decent people reserve for such occasions as imperatively require it. The clergyman into whose hands these letters fell after Smith's death, destroyed them, for the sake of Newton's reputation. In his disgust at the coarseness of their language, he forgot to consider the necessity of the case. What followed? It oozed out that Newton had written to his nephew letters so objectionable, that a worthy clergyman destroyed them,

lest they should damage the writer's character as a respectable man: the clergyman himself furnished the information that he burned them for 'vulgar phraseology.' But it did not transpire that the unpresentable language was necessary to point out to a young profligate an uncle's knowledge of his courses, until, a few years ago, when I availed myself of my acquaintance with relatives of the clergyman who destroyed the letters. They distinctly remembered the account he had given of what he destroyed. I did not suggest the reason. It came out without my informant's knowing what I wanted to discover; I had a strong suspicion which I carefully concealed. If it had become necessary, as might have been the case, to collect every possible presumption against Voltaire's insinuation, the loss of these letters, or, at least, of their real character, would have been felt. For there would have been lost the argument that an uncle, who reproved his nephew's vices in strong and irritating terms, could hardly have been an uncle upon whom it might have been retorted that he was, or had been, a consenting party to the dishonour of his own niece. And certainly, but for the good tradition still existing, there would have been heard and seen in print the sarcasm that though Newton—as made prominent by the last biographer—was so austere *in public*, that he broke with a colleague for one coarse story, he was free enough in his *private* letters to a nephew. To which, possibly, might have been added, that a hypocrite in one thing is likely to be a hypocrite in all; so that, in spite of his apparent purity of life, he might have

countenanced an advantageous connection between his patron and his relative. But by the simple truth he is safe from all reproach and from all inference, except that he used appropriate terms when more limited language might have conveyed only equally limited disapprobation to the nephew whom he wished to reform.

I now proceed to the string of facts from which I infer that Mrs. Catherine Barton, as by usage she would have been styled, or Mrs. Barton, as for special reasons she was often called, was privately married to Lord Halifax about April, 1706. From what I have published at different times it will appear that I have held this conclusion in two different ways: before the discovery of Newton's letter, as the supposition on which the circumstances take an air of probability which no other will give; after the discovery of that letter, as an inference which cannot be avoided. (See *Notes and Queries*, 1st Ser., viii. 258, 429, 543, 590; ix. 18; 2nd Ser., ii. 161, 265, 390; iii. 41, 250, 297. See also Brewster's 'Life of Newton,' and the review which I wrote of it in the *North British Review*, for August, 1855, No. 46.)

Charles Montague (born 1661, died May 19, 1715), fourth son of a younger son of the first Earl of Manchester, entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1679. Newton, nineteen years older (born December 25, 1642), was then Lucasian Professor. Johnson says that he was placed under the care of Dr. Montague, his relative, Master of the College. This is most likely: for

every student was then, as now, placed under the care of one of the fellows, who was his *tutor* (*in loco parentis*, not necessarily *teacher*). In our day, the number of fellows who are tutors is limited; and they are teachers. In the old time, many, probably the great majority, of the fellows were tutors; Newton himself was one. Dr. Montague was not Master until 1683, and so might have been a tutor in 1679. Charles Montague gained a fellowship, which he vacated in 1688. The records of a college are a strange mixture of memories and oblivions. Mr. Edleston is able to state that the rooms in which he wrote his annals of Newton's life were those in which Montague lived, and which he gave up at Midsummer, 1688. But the College does not know, nor will its records tell, what sort of thing—some dispensation, perhaps, to be got for money—was the *supersedeas* which appears in Newton's accounts among his *otiose et frustra expensa*. It has been suggested that it was a quaint name for some kind of *chair*—a supposition by no means to be rejected. As little would it have been known what were the *reaskes* which he ate with sherbet, if we had not happened still to have the word *rusks*.

Newton had been Lucasian Professor ten years when Montague entered college as a *fellow-commoner*—a grade which, as the name imports, brought him into daily communication with the fellows. It will appear from this how completely, at the beginning of their acquaintance, Newton was the great man and Montague the little one. A warm friendship grew up between them.

Though of noble family, Montague was the younger son of a younger son, not strong in purse, and intended for the Church. Shortly before the Revolution, he married his connexion, the Countess Dowager of Manchester; she died in 1698. This lady was a daughter of Sir Christopher Yelverton, Baronet, and had borne nine children to her first husband, Robert, Earl of Manchester, who died in 1682. The marriage must have taken place in 1688, when he vacated his fellowship: he was then aged twenty-seven, and his bride must have been at least ten, probably twenty, years older. It is important to remember this, in reference to some of what follows. Montague, a man of the world, a wit and a satirist, feeling ridicule as fashionable men of that day usually felt it, made his escape from the Church, and found his way into Parliament, upon the jointure of a lady many years older than himself, whom he would certainly have been held to have married for that jointure, as probably he did. The scoffers of that dreaded corporation, 'the Town,' when his rapid rise in politics made him a mark, held him up to ridicule as the *parvenu* of public life, making his entry, to use the phrase of one of the squibs, 'under the tutelage of a venerable matron.' He had then the position of a burnt child with respect to what his world would call an unsuitable marriage; and had therefore more reason than most others to conceal any second marriage, at which that world would have laughed, or at which he would fear it might laugh. The peer, whose infamous deception I shall have to allude to

in the sequel, was one who had probably suffered under similar ridicule: not for his own conduct, but for that of his father, who married the daughter of a small Dutch farmer. And perhaps Montague may have felt that his own appearance would give zest to any ridicule he might incur. The Duchess of Marlborough says of him: 'He was a frightful figure, and yet pretended to be a lover; and followed several beauties who laughed at him for it.' I assume the ladies' satire to have something in it. Newton and Montague found themselves colleagues in the Convention, which arranged the Revolution of 1688-89. For this course of action Montague soon passed Newton; and, by 1695, was a minister of the Crown. Newton, it clearly appears, formed during the earlier part of his parliamentary career, if not before, a wish to be employed in public affairs: this we may not call a sign of weakness; for it subsequently turned out that part of his strength, both intellectual and moral, lay in administration. His election to the Convention was a proof of high confidence in his power, out of science, on the part of the members of the University: it may well be doubted whether such a constituency, at such a crisis, would have invested half their share of the settlement in a compliment to the author of the 'Principia,' which, it may be added, was then little more than a twelvemonth old. That desire of *place* was in Newton's mind, and strongly fixed, there are two remarkable indications, and Locke was the especial depository of his thoughts and wishes on this subject. In a letter of 1692 is the

proof of the only coolness which Newton ever felt, so far as known record goes, towards Montague: he is inclined to believe that his friend is a false friend in respect to his getting a place. In the well-known letter to Locke of 1693, in which he begs pardon for certain injurious suspicions, he represents himself as having thought that Locke was trying to 'embroil him with women,' that is, as he proceeds to explain, '*to sell him a place*, and to embroil him.' Montague acted in the matter like a man who knew that his own power was based entirely on opinion, and could be confirmed only by success: he waited until he could put Newton *in his proper place;* by which delay he incurred suspicions of his friendship. The renovation of the coinage, resolved upon in 1695, was the opportunity: Montague brought Newton to the London Mint, Halley to the Chester Mint, and Locke to the Board of Trade. Perhaps this was hardly patronage to an old friend: it may be that Newton would in any case have been selected on the same grounds which determined the selection of Locke or Halley: unless we prefer the hypothesis that Newton brought in his friends. But there are indications that he was not strong enough for this. A few days before his actual appointment, in a letter of wounded feeling, he begs it may be contradicted that he is to be comptroller; he does not want any office at all; it is clear that the inferior office had been offered, and indignantly rejected. And here, again, we should perhaps be wrong if we attributed the refusal to feelings connected with the dignity or salary of the

post offered to him. He knew the kind of undertaking which he was brought in to superintend; and he may have formed his own opinion as to the position he must occupy in order to be able to carry out his own views. It was notorious that the place on which Newton probably insisted, the wardenship, had become a sinecure, and had been held by fine gentlemen who rarely showed their faces at the Mint. Newton may have guessed—he did guess harder things—that he as warden, with an efficient comptroller *under* him, could do new and heavy work better than as comptroller, with a fine gentleman warden *over* him; if so, the success of his operations is a presumption of the correctness of his views.

Newton was appointed Warden of the Mint in March, 1695-96, with £600 a year; and succeeded to the Mastership in 1699, with £1,500 a year. This second step was not patronage; Newton had been mainly instrumental in giving to Montague much reputation and a peerage, and the promotion was his due, and especially from a minister who had publicly declared that he could not have got through the coinage matter without him. When I first took up this subject, I made some investigation about the renovation of the coinage, and formed a much stronger opinion of the difficulties and hazards of the crisis than I could find expressed by anyone who had then written on the history of the time. Since I made that little inquiry Macaulay's account has appeared, which, to me at least, has none of that exaggeration for the sake of effect with which some charge the readable historian. I suspect that, by

assumption of converse, the describers of the past are often gauged by a test of this kind. If the volume, when taken from the shelf, give no dust, it is, 'Brilliant fellow! shallow dog!' If the air be somewhat obscured, then, 'Judicious writer! trustworthy guide!' But if there be no breathing without a cough for ten seconds, 'Profound inquirer! sound philosopher!'

If there be one or two clouds upon part of Newton's memory, in matters of temper and behaviour towards other men of science, there is not a speck upon his fame as a public officer, whether as to talent, judgment, or even *our highest* standard of integrity. It is to my purpose to remind the reader of this. We may feel pretty sure that the direction of the Mint is now permanently established as a scientific office. From the death of Conduit, Newton's successor, down to the appointment of Sir John Herschel, in 1850, the Mint was usually held by one or another of those gifted politicians, whose qualifications for coining money, carving letters, etc., etc., were so nicely balanced that their positions were of necessity settled by circumstances, independent of the duties they had to perform. There is a little coincidence which is just worth noting, as *pro tantulo* assimilating the career of Newton and his remote scientific successor. Newton added one coin to the national list, the gold *quarter-guinea*, which continued in circulation until towards the end of the last century. Sir John Herschel had a die constructed for the gold quarter-sovereign; a few coins were struck off, but none were issued. Newton created the coin for

circulation ; Sir John Herschel produced his specimens to show that the coin would be so small that it must often be lost ; for which, and other good reasons, he was against the proposal. (See my notes on the 'History of the Coinage,' in the 'Companion to the Almanac' for 1856. And if you happen to have the index to the *Edinburgh Review*, please make the following correction: for 'De M. (A.), his services in the renovation of the coinage,' *read* 'De M. (A.), his *account of Newton's* services,' etc.')

Catherine Barton (born, 1680 ; died, 1739) was the daughter of Newton's half-sister, Hannah Smith, who was the daughter of Newton's mother and her second husband, Barnabas Smith, a clergyman (married, January, 1645 ; died about 1656). Mr. Barton was also a clergyman. His status in society is a part of the presumable reason why Montague should wish to conceal a marriage with Miss Barton, if such a thing took place. It is desirable my reader should know at once that I have nothing to do with this reason. I think I prove the marriage, and in a manner wholly unconnected with the motives for concealment.

A memorandum of Conduit, Miss Barton's (second) husband, is preserved, stating that the Bartons of Brigstock possessed estates in Northamptonshire for several hundred years, and were nearly related to the Earl of Rockingham, Lord Griffin, Sir Jeffrey Palmer, and other honourable families in that neighbourhood. To which Mrs. Conduit herself adds they were descended from the Swinfords ; and to this the biographer further adds,

for the greater glory of Miss Barton, 'from Catherine Swinford, the wife of Sir Hugh Swinford, who became the mistress of John of Gaunt.' If the family had been flourishing, we should have been told the name of the reigning chief; in all probability it was decayed, and may have been no greater than that of Newton of Woolsthorpe, of which manor Sir Isaac was lord from the moment of his birth to that of his death. The question is whether there was anything in all this which would have made the wits and the versifiers see more in the wife of the gay minister than the daughter of a country parson without a penny.

A correspondent of *Notes and Queries*, who seems to be a connection of the Barton family, and has furnished details of their history, does not give so decided an account of their position. He says (1st Ser., viii. 543): 'The Montagues had a residence in the village of Brigstock, in Northamptonshire, where the Bartons lived. The Bartons were a family of good descent, and had long been lessees of the Crown, with the Montagues, for lands near Braystock' (*sic*). If these Montagues be, as I suppose, the family of Lord Halifax, the discovery of the descendant of the co-lessees of his ancestors in the niece of his old friend would be of a tendency to promote the growth of acquaintance.

A person must have some notion of the real tone of the time before he can judge what the coffee-house wits would have said. Addison's *Spectator*, etc., gives only the same sort of notion which Scott's *Ivanhoe* gives of the brutality of a Norman baron. Modern sensibilities

—in England at least—require that the bugle should sound before the poor Jew is actually broiling on the coals; and Addison could not have painted real life in all its colours without much risk of his nose being slit. That is, in the character of a reproving moralist; he might have cracked it up, as the Americans say, with every encouragement.

The gay world made little account of the rural aristocracy, except when the wealth or the rank was great. Respect for descent from worthy ancestors of local importance was not the feeling of the classes for whom the lower novelists wrote. Many will remember the school of what were called *fashionable novels*, which flourished forty years ago. They described coteries of trumpery men and women, who by virtue of having nothing to do, and being quite unable to do it if they had, constituted themselves a class apart, paid the Crown a slight respect, with a deep sense of the honour they conferred, and ostracised the Duke of Wellington as of *vilain ton*—a reproach which Byron borrowed. I remember one of these productions, in which a fashionable minister—a Halifax of our day—had condescended to marry the daughter of a considerable country baronet, a very pompous goose, no doubt; but the exigencies of these novels made all rural gentlemen geese who did not spend the season in London, that they might set the fools feeding and dancing. The remarks which were made, and the ridicule which was cast upon this unworthy derogator, were just such as subsequent reading about the time of Anne showed me as likely to have

been made, with all the coarseness of the earlier period, upon such a marriage as I believe to have privately taken place. This marriage, notwithstanding the uncle's fame and position, would have been looked upon as laughable in the gay minister of State, and would have been measured by the father's position, and the money prospects of the uncle, in 1706. The Frenchman's comment upon such a match would have been a mild expression of public opinion. 'Elle est bien quant à la physique; mais quant à la morale! trois mille francs; pas davantage!'

Miss Barton was educated by Newton, and she alone, so far as positively known, of all his nephews and nieces; she was probably an orphan, and certainly without means. She had one brother, who was in the army, and was killed in 1711; his death was better than his life, and nothing known of him at all relates to his sister. In 1700 the niece, then aged twenty, had become a resident in her uncle's house, and was in the country for recovery from small-pox. It has been affirmed by the biographer, who introduces positive assertions *pro re nata*, that she had not come to London in 1700. Of this the reader shall judge for himself from the letter which Newton wrote to her, fortunately preserved by his having made some Mint calculations on the back of it after her return. I premise that, independently of Conduitt's information, Catherine Barton was educated by Newton. A connection of the family (who signs H.) writes in the *Gentleman's Magazine:* 'He had a half-sister who had a daughter to whom he gave the best of

educations—the famous witty Miss Barton, who married Mr. Conduitt of the Mint.'

'To Mrs. Catherine Barton, at Mr. Ayres, at Pudlicot, near Woodstock, in Oxfordshire.

'LONDON, *August* 5, 1700.

'DEAR NIECE,

'I have your two letters, and am glad the air agrees with you; and though the fever is loath to leave you, yet I hope it abates, and that the remains of the small-pox are dropping off apace. Sir Joseph Tilley is leaving Mr. Toll's house, and it's probable I may succeed him. I intend to send you some wine by the next carrier, which I beg the favour of Mr. Gyre and his lady to accept. My Lady Norris thinks you forget your promise to write her, and wants a letter from you. Pray let me know by your next how your face is, and if the fever be going. Perhaps warm milk from the cow may help to abate it.

'I am,

'Your very loving Uncle,

'IS. NEWTON.'

Now, if anyone cannot see that this is a letter written to an inmate of the writer's house, away for change of air, no one can make him: every line breathes implied appeal to the receiver's knowledge of London. Miss Barton, aged twenty, could hardly have known Lady Norris up to the point of correspondence if she had never lived in town. And the girl who had not lived with her uncle is to know Mr. Toll's house, that is, the house of which Mr. Toll was landlord; of this we are to suppose her uncle had informed her in previous correspondence, just to keep her ready for what might happen, before Sir Joseph Tilley had made up his mind to seek another residence. I wonder if he had gone all the way up the street, to be *in omnia paratus?* It should be

added that Newton, who was then in Jermyn Street, did not change his residence until 1709, when he resided in Chelsea for a year, and then in the house in Martin Street, at the corner of Leicester Fields, which is so well known as his abode.

Miss Barton, then, was with her uncle before 1700: the presumption is that she began to keep his house in 1697, as soon as he had a house to keep; she would then have been just about leaving school. Where and what she was from 1706 to 1715, is the main object of the present inquiry. In August, 1717, she married John Conduitt, M.P., who was in the Mint during Newton's life, and succeeded him at his death. Mr. and Mrs. Conduitt lived with Newton, when in town, from their marriage until his death. Mrs. Conduitt's only child, a daughter, Catherine, married, in 1740, John Wallop, afterwards Lord Lymington, his father being created Earl of Portsmouth in 1743. This explains how Newton's papers, which came into Mrs. Conduitt's hands, became the property of the Earls of Portsmouth, who are the descendants of Newton's mother, and, by failure of the male line, as near as any to Newton in blood. A grandson of Catherine Wallop took the name of Fellowes, on succeeding a maternal uncle.

In the life of Sydney Smith, by his daughter, Lady (Sir Henry)* Holland (1855). There was a startling

* We want some way of distinguishing ladies which shall be shorter than a full and additional description of their husbands. I have met persons who had a vague idea that Lady (Lord) Holland wrote the 'Life' in question. It is not to be wondered at. Sydney Smith

announcement that the famous witty divine was the grandson of 'the famous witty' Catherine Barton, who was alleged to have married M. Olier, a French refugee. In the second edition reference is made to a correction by Sir D. Brewster, and further inquiry is hinted at. In the fourth edition the lady is *Maria* Barton, alleged to be of the same stock. This may easily be true, for Colonel Barton, Catherine's brother, left children, and thus Sydney Smith probably is a descendant of Newton's mother. It is even possible that the wit of Sydney Smith and of his great great aunt may have a family likeness: but not a word of the lady is preserved to judge by.

Mr. Conduitt left certain family memoranda, one of which states that his wife lived with her uncle, before and after her marriage with himself, nearly twenty years. Newton lived in London just short of thirty-one years, from his appointment in March, 1696, to his death in March, 1727. Conduitt's rough mode of speaking will be amply verified, if allowing her to have joined her uncle before 1698, when she was eighteen, she were away from him during the interval 1706—1715. And this is the period which I believe to have been that of her marriage with Halifax, as he was then called. The circumstances attending the beginning, duration, and end of this period, followed by the letter which Newton wrote immediately after the death of Halifax, form the proof of the marriage. There are corroborations, and

was a visitor at Holland House, the lady of which was well known for her talents; in a couple of generations it may be the common story.

there are difficulties: these the reader may deal with as he pleases: there is no upsetting the facts from which my inference is drawn.

April 12th, 1706, Halifax added a codicil to a will made two days before, in which codicil he left Miss Barton all his jewels and £3,000. He left these legacies—and the words must be carefully noted with reference to an *additional word* used at a later period—'as a small token of the great love and affection I have long had for her.' In this same year (October 26th) an annuity of £200 a year for the use of Catherine Barton, and on her life, was bought by *somebody* in Newton's name, and held in trust by Halifax. That the purchaser was either Newton or Halifax may be assumed. If Newton, it would have been as easy to have said it as to have used language which rather implies the contrary, and it would have been far more respectable; for annuities presented to young and beautiful women by other than near relatives have an awkward look even now, and would have looked worse in 1706. It must be remembered that £200 a year was then an affluent provision for a single woman, fully equivalent in purchasing power to £500 a year at the present time.

Looking at Miss Barton's age, it is hardly to be thought that this annuity could have been bought for £2,000, at which, as a minimum, I may place it: De Moivre, reckoning as high as six per cent, would have made it £2,400; and De Moivre, Newton's intimate friend, and the first actuary of the day, would almost certainly have been consulted. Newton, when at Cambridge, could

not have saved money. In 1676, he was excused the payment of a shilling a week to the Royal Society: and though I suspect, with Mr. Edleston, that his application to be excused was made under the impression that he would speedily have to vacate his fellowship; yet we never hear of his being able to renew his contributions during his Cambridge career. He had enjoyed £600 a year for four years, and £1,500 a year for six years, receiving thus £11,400 in ten years, from which a deduction must be made for expenses of settlement in London and of taking possession of office. Newton's patrimony, though he was lord with court leet and court baron, and pit and gallows too for aught I know, was only £30 a year; his *matrimony*, as we should have called it, if the word had not been strangely divorced, was an estate of £50 a year belonging to his mother, and a 'parcel of land,' value not stated, which his mother made it a condition of her second marriage should be settled by her intended husband on the son of her former marriage. Some take the estate of £50 and the parcel of land to be all one. His fellowship at Trinity, as a resource in London (at Cambridge there was also board and lodging), was a pittance, the amount of which may be guessed at by the description of that simple-minded genius, Dr. Barrow. Speaking of a gentleman who resigned his fellowship, rather than take orders, he says: 'Indeed a fellowship with us is now so poor that I cannot think it worth holding by an ingenuous person upon terms of so much scruple.' This is vague, as Barrow does not give any notion of the rate

per annum at which an ingenuous person can keep down scruples; but all things put together we may be pretty sure that a Trinity fellowship did not yield £60 a year to a non-resident. Newton held his fellowship until 1701. The Lucasian Professorship was reckoned, when I was an undergraduate, worth £100 a year; in Newton's time it was probably less: he held the profits until 1699. (Since I wrote this, I have come upon Mr. Edleston's publication of the college accounts during Newton's time, by which it appears that £28 rather overdoes the average money value of the fellowship; this includes the allowance *pro pane et potu*—breakfast-money we may call it, and is so subject to some deduction for non-residence. This, with rooms and dinner, includes everything. Mr. Edleston puts the Lucasian professorship at £100 a year: but here he has no guide, and probably speaks by the present time. To Mr. Airy it was worth £99 a year.) There is not much likelihood that, by 1706, he should have saved £2,000. It is incredible that he should have saved a great deal more. Now Newton had peculiar notions about the claims of next of kin; he seems to have thought that they had a right to the way in which the law distributes the personality of intestates. He made no will, but he gave the children of a deceased nephew (Catherine's brother) their share during his lifetime. The unworthy nephew I have spoken of, shared with the rest, as did Mr. Conduitt, the annuity.* All these things put together

* This Smith was certainly a loose talker. He gave accounts of his uncle which contain only what he might have found in print,

make it incredible that the annuity, so large as it was, could or would have been bought by Newton; a moderate provision would have had less improbability, and we cannot suppose that, if he had given Miss Barton her share during her life—and the annuity would have been a lion's share, looking at his age and hers, and valued by actuary's lore, which Newton understood as well as any man—he would have allowed her to take with the rest, after Halifax had made her richer than himself, as we shall see, and she had married a member of Parliament of ample means. Her daughter passed for having £60,000 in possession or reversion, when she married Mr. Wallop: so said the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which used in those days to give the reputed fortunes of new-made brides. It would have better deserved its name if it had given the fortunes of those who were left.

Finally, and conclusively, Conduitt left a list of the

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and some of it palpably false. He represented himself as having been left £500 a year in land, though all the world knew that Newton died intestate, and that a Newton was heir-at-law. He had his share of the money, as one of the next-of-kin. He represented himself to his clerical friend as author of the song beginning:

> 'Young Orpheus tickled his harp so well,
> With a twinkum, twankum, twang,' etc.

This is possible, but not probable, for Smith was born about 1700, and the song was so well established in 1729 that the tune to which it went was referred to as the air of 'Old Orpheus tickled,' etc. One of the airs in 'Folly,' Gay's second part of the 'Beggar's' Opera (1729), which was refused licence on political grounds, is described as to this tune. In 1705-18 there were two masques and a ballet, as we now call it, on the subject of 'Orpheus;' and this is probably the period of the song.

benefactions which Newton bestowed on his relations during his lifetime, in which there is not a word about any annuity bought for Miss Barton. And this, though the annuity itself had been published to all the world in Halifax's will, in terms of severe ambiguity. It was not then Newton who bought the annuity; it must have been Halifax, who accordingly in 1706, besides leaving Miss Barton all his jewels and £3,000, presented her with an annuity of £200 a year, with the consent of her uncle, in whose name it was bought.

Next, I am to ask what account can be got of Miss Barton during the time (1706—1715) between the gift of the annuity and the death of the giver. On this point there are three evidences from very different quarters. It is quite certain that she and Halifax were very frequently together, either in her uncle's house or elsewhere; and if it were in her uncle's house, no one who frequently mentioned both their names could have any reason, either to avoid all allusion to their knowledge of each other, or to avoid all mention of Newton.

Dean Swift (not yet Dean) was during the period an intimate acquaintance of Miss Barton, for whom he had a genuine respect and affection. She was, as the *Gentleman's Magazine* afterwards called her, the 'famous witty Miss Barton.' Swift, as is well known, had an intellectual craving for intelligent female society. It cannot be traced that Swift had the smallest acquaintance with Newton, either in private or in public, and there is hardly such a thing as an allusion to Newton in his writings. There is one burlesque compliment in

the preface to his *Polite Conversation*, which, as most readers will not have seen it—I prefer this phrase to the usual statement that every higher-form schoolboy knows it—I quote:

'And yet so incurable is the love of detraction, perhaps beyond what the charitable reader will easily believe that I have been assured by more than one credible person, how some of my enemies have industriously whispered about that one Isaac Newton, an instrument-maker, living near [Swift should have said in, which will presently be worth some note] Leicester Fields, and afterwards [he should have said then, which also note; it would seem that Swift fancied Newton had an official residence in the Mint, when master] a workman at the Mint in the Tower, might possibly pretend to vie with me for fame in future time. The man, it seems, was knighted for making sun-dials better than others of his trade, and was thought to be a conjuror, because he knew how to draw lines and circles upon a slate, which nobody could understand. But adieu to all noble attempts for endless renown, if the ghost of an obscure mechanic shall be raised up to enter into competition with me, only for his skill in making pothooks and hangers with a pencil, which many thousand accomplished gentlemen and ladies can perform as well with a pen and ink upon a piece of paper, and in a manner as little intelligible as those of Sir Isaac.'

Swift was an old acquaintance, and in his Whig days a political friend of Halifax. As late as October, 1709, Halifax was endeavouring to procure him promotion. In that month he writes: 'I am quite ashamed for myself and my friends to see you left in a place so incapable of testing you. . . . Mr. Addison and I are entered into a new confederacy. . . . till your worth is placed in that light it ought to shine. Dr. South holds out still, but he cannot be immortal. . . . And upon all occasions that shall offer, I will be your constant

solicitor, your sincere admirer, and your unalterable friend.' Four years afterwards, the unalterable friend called Swift a villain in the *House* of Lords, or assented to the name when given by another. But then Swift had joined the Tories, and had written very naughty antiwhiggery. This point must be noted: Torifaction began in 1710, and was a gradual process.

In 1710—1711, as appears by his journal to Stella, he often visited Miss Barton *at her lodgings*. This word did not then mean hired apartments, but any residence whatever, even the rooms of a guest in the house of his host, or of a prisoner in the Tower. Strafford's plan was to enable the Crown to keep up the army without any aid 'from the king's lodgings!' Nor did it imply part of a house, as distinguished from the whole, it is the synonyme of *residence*, as now used. Sir D. Brewster, who professes to quote all the passages of the *Journal* in which either is mentioned, gives the passage in which Swift dines with Miss Barton at her lodgings, and explains that, because Newton was then changing his house, she was probably in *lodgings* in our modern sense. But he omits the passage in which, near the same time, Swift dines with Halifax at *his* lodgings: no reason suggested itself why the rich minister of the Crown should happen to be living in apartments at so much a week. To no one mention of Miss Barton does Swift attach the name of the husband, uncle, or other relative with whom she lived; he does not even describe her as Newton's niece. If the lodging had been in Newton's house, it is very difficult to see how Swift,

who was giving Stella every possible gossip, great and small, could have avoided all allusion to his frequent visits at the house of the world-famous author of the 'Principia,' Master of the Mint, and President of the Royal Society. We have seen that Swift must have afterwards believed that Newton lived at the Mint, as Master, after living in Leicester Fields: not a likely slip for a man who had often visited *at* the house of the Master of the Mint in Leicester Fields. But why should he write to Stella about his friends' friends, in whom she could take no interest? I know not why, but I know that he did so in hundreds of cases; and, especially, he notes the death of Colonel Barton, Catherine's good-for-nothing brother, for whom she could mourn only as 'matter of form.' The number of subjects connected with literature, and sometimes with science, according to his notion of it, which he ventures to bring forward, as *non secus ac nota*, show that Stella had a tolerable stock of reading, notwithstanding what we know of her small share of regular education. When, towards the end, he makes his first—I think his only—mention of a new friend who was to be an old one—'Mr. Pope has published a fine poem called *Windsor Forest*: read it'—he seems to imply that all the new literature was at once within Stella's reach. It is incredible that he should have come in contact with Newton, time after time, without ever naming him; he gives the visits of every day. Observe that the question lies between Miss Barton living in Halifax's or in Newton's house. I have met with some who, to recon-

cile matters, suppose she left her old uncle—who, by their account, was the person who had just bought her £200 a year—while she lived alone in her own lodgings, seeing fashionable company ; with these I need not argue.

If Swift met Miss Barton at the house of Lord Halifax, the peculiar circumstances would more easily explain why the host is never mentioned in conjunction with the lady. It can be gathered from Swift's account that she was in respectable society, and that her private conversation with her bachelor friend had the full freedom of a married woman of that time, being a trifle more than the freedom of our own. This appears from anecdotes which he gives Stella, as told by Miss Barton. These anecdotes Sir D. Brewster has omitted from the list of passages which he professes to give entire. If these conversations took place in Halifax's house, we can imagine why Swift was silent on the relation of his two friends. Stella was afterwards his own privately married wife; but whether she were so in 1710–11 is not known; and it is probable that his own position would render an allusion to similar circumstances, in another case, difficult and embarrassing. For myself, I am inclined to believe that Swift was married to Stella before he left Ireland, though a later date is usually assigned.

Again, suppose Miss Barton living in Newton's house, and Halifax her frequent visitor, attracted by the charm of her wit and intelligence, and an older friend's admiration of her beauty. Swift, too, is another friend of the

same kind. The two are among Swift's dearest: he 'loves' Halifax better than any Whig, and Miss Barton better than anybody. The two are certainly intimates. Swift dines with both, talks with both, inveighs against the Whiggery of both. But he never mentions them in the same sentence; never refers to either in any way which contains allusion to the other. There is not even so much as a rap at the lady's Whiggery as the retail of Halifax's wholesale. This is unlike all the rest of the journal, which is one of the most gossiping records of who and who were together that ever was jotted down. It is marvellous, if there were no special reason for silence. He dines with Halifax by invitation on the 28th, and with Miss Barton alone on the 30th. This he writes in sentences separated by a few lines. And not even then, when the names of the two dear friends of himself and of each other come almost out of the same dip of ink, does he make any allusion to their knowledge of each other. If indeed all the circumstances should prove that they were living together in private marriage, we can understand the studied silence, and we can find no difficulty in the adjacent visits. We may fancy we hear the lady say, in the party of the 28th, 'We can have no talk with all these people round us; come and dine with me the day after to-morrow, when the earl will be out, and we can chat at our ease.'

Something may be drawn from the way in which Swift speaks of his friend; she is always *Mrs.* Barton. By the (declining) usage of the day, as a single girl

who is what is now called *out*, she would have been Mrs. *Catherine* Barton; as a girl in the nursery, she would have been *Miss*. I should not have insisted on this taken alone; for Swift, who had lived in the country or in Ireland nearly all his life, might easily have been ignorant or negligent on such a point. But there is more: Swift, whether by being in advance of his age, or because the Irish habit differed from the English, was an inveterate *Miss*-er of single women. The fast young lady of the *Polite Conversation* is always *Miss* Notable; the publication was in 1738, but the dialogues were written many years before. We go back to the journal, and find a correction which shows that he paid attention to such points. *Miss* Forester, as Swift calls her when he first names her, a maid of honour, was twenty-three years old in 1711. Ten years before she had been married to a boy of fifteen, Sir George Downing; and, as usual in such cases, of which several are recorded, the bridegroom was at once removed. In this case Sir George Downing continued on his travels for more than ten years. The pair at last found out that neither had any liking for the other, and a suit of nullity by reason of age was in progress in 1715. A pamphlet then calls the lady *Mrs.* Forester; and this title she seems to have borne in right of her ring. When Swift mentions her again, two months afterwards, he seems to have learnt her history, for she is then styled *Mistress*. We may from such slight points take Swift as good evidence that his friend was styled *Mrs.* Barton, which agrees with the biographer of Halifax, as presently mentioned.

As a single girl in the house of her uncle, she could not have been so styled; the Christian name must have been inserted.

She thus passed for a wife or a widow. Baily, stating that she was not the widow of Colonel Barton, adds—and is followed by Sir D. Brewster—that *Mrs.* was in that day the title of unmarried ladies. So it was; but not without the Christian name. In law-papers, wills, etc., even down to our own day, the Christian name is added; and notice would be served on Mary Smith, widow, as 'Mrs. Mary Smith.' This explains how Mrs. Barton, as she certainly was called in 1710, is Mrs. Catherine Barton in her register of marriage with Conduitt. But, out of law form, Miss Mary of the nursery became Mrs. Mary of the drawing-room, and so continued until marriage. The transition remained a usage until within forty years of this day; but it shifted its period. Miss Mary passed all her youth under that name, and became Mrs. Mary—or took *brevet rank*, as the ladies used to say, in ignorance of the old usage—at such time as she chose to call herself an old maid. This has now disappeared; and the Americans are making a new step, and beginning to call wives by the title of *Miss*.

In 1710, and again in 1711, a Mrs. de la Rivière Manley published what she called 'Memoirs' . . . *written by Eginardus*. This work was reprinted several times, and had a great run. It contained a great quantity of current scandal; had it been better known in our day, Macaulay would not have been unable to

trace the meaning of Pope's allusion to the handsome sum which the Duchess of Cleveland gave to young Churchill:

> 'The gallant, too, to whom she paid it down,
> Lived to refuse his mistress half-a-crown.'

Mrs. Manley says that Churchill, when holding the bank at play in a private party, refused to lend twenty pieces to the duchess, who had lost all her money.

In it Catherine Barton, under the name of *Bartica*, is distinctly represented as the mistress of Lord Halifax; and Halifax is represented as saying that he had got her 'worthy ancient parent a good post for connivance.' The word *parent* is used in the French sense. Mrs. Manley (de la Rivière by birth) was born and bred in Guernsey; she talks of a person *rendering himself* to a place, etc. That this story was never noticed nor answered at the time proves nothing; but when we come to the wording of Lord Halifax's last will, we shall see how much the knowledge which he must have had of Mrs. Manley's story, and its circulation, augments the presumption to be derived from his own description of the relation between himself and Miss Barton.

It is very remarkable that Swift, who, bold as the word may be, was as much the foe of immorality as he was the friend of indecorum, was partial to Mrs. Manley. I have seen it said that they were joined in the editorship of the *Examiner;* but this seems to be a perversion of an equally erroneous statement of Steel's. He speaks half in satire of her first edition as the 'noble memoirs of Europe.' When Harley was stabbed by Guiscard at the Privy Council, Swift, whose intimacy with Harley

and his friends gave him the best information, sent 'hints' to Mrs. Manley for a sixpenny narrative. He interceded with Lord Peterborough for a pension, grounded on the *Atalantis*—a former work of 1709—which was a satire on the Whigs; and he dined with her at the desire, and even, it would seem, in the company, of Mrs. Van Homrigh.*

One thing seems to me insuperably probable. Halifax was, of all the Whigs, the one whom Swift continued to regard as a friend. 'I told him he was the only Whig in England I loved or had any good opinion of.' Of Miss Barton he says, 'I love her better than anyone here, and see her seldomer.' Swift was a strong friend and partisan; if the story told in the *Eginardus* about his two favourites had been a malicious turn given to the familiar friendship of the two in Newton's house and under Newton's sanction, showing Mrs. Manley capable of deliberately originating the attempt to blast the character of a woman—and that woman Catherine Barton—in order to vex and lower a Whig leader—and Halifax the man—I do not believe that Swift would have furnished her with materials, or endeavoured to get her a pension, or dined with her. But—and even this much is strange, though one of the two suppositions must be the truth—it may more easily be credited that he was tolerant of a satire which only embodied a current belief, arising out of her living in the house of Lord Halifax; for which, as we shall presently be told, 'those

* For some information on this subject, see *Notes and Queries*, vol. iii. 2nd ser., pp. 351, 392.

who were given to censure passed a judgment upon her which she no ways merited'—and no wonder.

The journal must be read by those who would know how strong were the feelings of this arch satirist, and how likely an unfounded aspersion on valued friends would be to rouse him. Just after Harley was stabbed, he writes to Stella in such agitation that his words seem to misrepresent the place in which the crime was committed. 'Pray pardon my distraction; I now think of all his kindness to me. The poor creature now lies stabbed in his bed by a desperate French popish villain. Good-night, and God preserve you both and pity me—I want it.' This story has many digressions as yet to the matter; the following is wholly foreign. No story has been oftener repeated about Swift than that he allowed Harley to call him *Jonathan;* and this is always told to prove that he was a parasite who bore with disrespectful familiarity from his political patrons. An odd imputation this on the man who, when Harley sent him money as payment for writing a pamphlet in aid of the cause, blew his *patron* up in strong language, and refused to go near him again until he had humbly apologized. Nothing is more notorious than the familiar arrogance with which Swift treated the ministers, who bore with it for the sake of his support. He dispatched one minister into the House of Commons to tell another that he would not dine with him if the hour were later than six. These facts are adverse to the impression derived from Swift's toleration of familiarity; I do not say they ought to create an opposite opinion about

Swift. Johnson's remark may have truth as well as pungency—'No man can pay a more servile tribute to the great, than by suffering his liberty in their presence to aggrandize him in his own esteem.' It is strange that the whole story about *Jonathan* should rarely, if ever, be made complete; often, if not always, the liberty was such as would be that of calling a man a horse, by way of saying that he was not an ass. Swift had a sore point in his dislike of his cousin *Thomas* Swift, who, among other things, was willing to be called the principal author of the 'Tale of a Tub.' Harley found this out, and used to call him, and introduce as, Dr. *Thomas* Swift, to his great disgust. It may be suspected that often, perhaps from the beginning and always, *Jonathan* was a joke which was to be read *not Thomas this time.*

To return to the subject. All the slight indications which can be gathered from Swift's journal seem to confirm the belief that Miss Barton was not living with her uncle. One, yet unmentioned, has two sides. Swift, when in or near Leicester Fields (now Square), calls Mrs. Barton his 'near neighbour.' Now *Newton* lived in a house touching Leicester Fields. Take this alone, and we suppose the niece was living with her uncle. But, independently of the silence about the uncle, how are we to explain that Swift, who records his frequent visits to many people he cared little about, at long distances from his own lodging, complains that the one he loved best he saw least of. Was it so difficult to look in for a gossip upon a neighbour who was close at

hand? We know that Miss Barton returned his regard; and we may suspect that the 'famous witty' young lady would have let the cook spoil Uncle Isaac's favourite pudding rather than miss a dish of talk with the author of the 'Tale of a Tub.' Her character for wit and intellect charmed all who have come down; as speaking of her, 'J'ai conservé,' writes Remond de Montmort in 1716, 'l'idée du monde la plus magnifique de son esprit et de sa beauté.'

Suppose that the lady was in the house of Lord Halifax, and we see all about it; it was of increasing difficulty for Swift, who had gone over, and was more and more Torified every day, to keep up his connection with Whigs, even when dear friends. We see his intimacy with Halifax gradually drooping as the journal goes on; and we may presume that he was obliged at last to watch his opportunities, and to visit Miss Barton when Halifax, and still more his friends, were out of the way. His friendship with her continued to the end; among his correspondence is preserved a letter from her as Mrs. Conduitt. It is of Nov. 29, 1733, and is labelled by the Dean, 'My old friend Mrs. Barton, now Mrs. Conduitt.' So completely is she isolated in the journal, that it would be open to anyone, but for the label of this letter, to contend that Mrs. Barton of the journal was a different person from Newton's niece. It must be added that there is record elsewhere of Swift being employed by the Tory Government to carry to Miss Barton a proposition for Newton's consideration, that he should retire in favour of one of their friends upon a

pension of £2,000 a year. Newton, whom a job repelled at a higher rate than the inverse square of the distance—though he was, in all honesty, both a place-hunter and a money-hoarder—sent back that they might have the place, but he would not have a pension. I wish he had accepted the offer; he would have made it a good job for science.

There may have been a temporary alienation. The last time Swift mentions her, it is as vexing him with her politics. 'I have been so teased with Whiggish discourse by Mrs. Barton and Lady Betty Germaine; never saw the like.' As to Halifax, his friendship seems to have ended, a year or two after, with an explosion in the House of Lords, on the debate about Swift's 'Public Spirit of the Whigs.' Some accounts give Wharton, some Halifax, as demanding the discovery of 'the villain who wrote that false and scandalous libel;' but the sentiment was in the mind of both; and both knew, what everyone else knew, that Swift was the author.

The rupture was complete, and Swift had bitter recollections. At least, as long after as 1739, Swift, in the note he made to the 'Characters,' by Macky, as he called himself, writes of Halifax: 'His encouragements (of literature) were only good words and good dinners; I never heard him say one good thing, or seem to taste what was said by another.' Mrs. Conduitt's letter, above mentioned, hints at a cessation of intimacy, and refers to twenty years back from 1733, that is to the time of the rupture with Halifax. She says:

'I should have guessed your holiness would rather have laid than called up the ghost of any departed friendship, which, since you are brave enough to face, you will find divested of every terror but the remorse that you were abandoned to be an alien to your friends, your country, and yourself. Not to renew an acquaintance with one who can, twenty years after, remember a bare intention to serve him, would be to throw away a prize I am not now able to repurchase.'

Swift had just as much as seen her in the long interval. In April, 1730, he writes to Lady Worsley: 'How is our old friend Mrs. Barton (I forget her new name)? I saw her three years ago at Court, almost dwindled to an echo, and hardly knew her. . .'

Sir D. Brewster quotes the passage in which Swift says he sees no old friends except Lord Halifax, 'and him very seldom.' These words he puts in italics, of which the meaning is, that if he see Halifax but seldom, and Miss Barton were living with Halifax, he would not often see Miss Barton, which is against evidence. But a few lines further on, Sir D. Brewster has to quote Swift as saying that he loves Miss Barton better than anyone, '*and sees her seldomer.*' These words he does not put in italics: so I must.

At the end of his list of quotations, Sir D. Brewster says, that 'after reading the preceding passages, it would be difficult to understand how Mrs. Barton, whom Swift esteemed and loved, could ever have resided under the roof of Lord Halifax as his mistress.' So say I: the impression on my mind is that Swift alone clears her of this; and so thought Lord Macaulay, as we shall see. But Sir D. Brewster gets into singular confusions; he thinks, throughout his argument, that

he upsets one whenever he makes out a strong probability that Miss Barton is simply a friend. The question between him and me is whether she was a Platonic friend or a wife: it is amusing to see how hard he fights against the marriage. Anyone who dips into some parts of his book would suppose that the *sole* question was, wife or mistress: I for the wife, and he for the mistress.

We may ask how Swift came to be acquainted with Miss Barton at all. Sir D. Brewster says it was probably through Lady Betty Germaine, whom he had known from her childhood: the three are known to have been once in company together, and this is all that is in print of the acquaintance between Lord Berkeley's daughter and Miss Barton. It is much more likely that it was through Halifax, even on the supposition that Miss Barton lived with her uncle, and Halifax was but her intimate friend. Swift was much backwards and forwards in London, from the time he went to Ireland, and he spent all 1708, and part of 1709, in London. Hence, when in 1710, being again in London, he began his journal to Stella, he might easily have been acquainted with Miss Barton for several years; it may be that the acquaintance commenced in 1706, when, according to my verdict, Halifax married Miss Barton. In 1709, Swift hints that he gets political news from her; meaning, no doubt, that Halifax was her informant. Writing to Mr. Hunter, prisoner in France, he says: 'Mrs. Barton is still in my good graces. I design to make her tell me when

you are to be redeemed, and will send you word. There's it now, you think I am in jest; but I assure you the best intelligence I get of public affairs is from ladies, for the ministers never tell me anything. . .' When Halifax died, in 1715, a very eulogistic life was immediately issued from the press of the notorious Curll, written, it is said, by a certain William Pittis, whose name is found in Watt, but this work is not mentioned. A book of this publisher, it has been argued, is of no authority: knowledge of the time disputes this conclusion. The reader must remember that in 1715 the bookseller performed functions now almost entirely restricted to the editor of the political or literary journal. As seller of, and solely responsible for, hosts of anonymous pamphlets which were very effective, he kept open a kind of news-bazaar, of which the articles were sold separately. His shop was an emporium of gossip and intelligence—as gossip and intelligence then went; slander and loyalty in one place, slander and treason in another. His counter was spread with flying sheets, which would in our day have been *articles*, if our journals could have tolerated such articles as they would have made. While the very best of the publishers, as Tonson and Lintot, were not accustomed to consider the pillory as quite out of practical possibility, the very worst, who may have been Curll and Tom Osborne, who had stood in the pillory, were *bonâ fide* publishers of good literature, and risked large sums on works of lasting value: take Curll's county histories as an example. The very name of

Osborne is an illustration. He bore a bad character, both as a publisher and as a man; but Sam Johnson was afterwards in his employ, and the Harleian Catalogue was from his press. And though it was rather Osbornian to make a fifth volume of that catalogue out of his own stock, and sell the contents as parts of Lord Oxford's library, yet those contents do no discredit to the collection described in the preceding volumes. Curll was no worse than Osborne; and Pittis may have been as good in moral character as Johnson. When the great lexicographer knocked Osborne down in his own shop, the deed was done with a copy of the Septuagint. In our time, possibly Osborne would have lived in Holywell Street; but the Septuagint would, perhaps, not have been at hand, nor a good man to use it, for reproof or correction. I say *perhaps*, for even in our own day there is a mixture of the sound and the tainted in the trade of some booksellers.

We may rely upon it that Curll's press, in serious and eulogistic biography, did not circulate, far less invent, groundless stories against the individuals whom it was praising and defending; nor willingly admit and produce anything but what was too well known to be denied or concealed. The writer says that, after the death of his wife, Halifax determined on single life, and—

'Cast his eye upon the widow of one Colonel Barton, and niece of the famous Sir Isaac Newton, to be superintendent of his domestic affairs. But as this lady was young, beautiful, and gay, so those that were given to censure passed a judgment upon her which she no ways merited, since she was a woman of strict honour and virtue.'

An additional sentence, assuring the reader that Halifax's will clears her of all imputation, will be quoted in connection with the will. We find then, and without contradiction from Newton, the assertion that Catherine Barton lived in Halifax's house as his housekeeper; and that an unfavourable judgment was passed upon her by persons given to censure. The story is one which the friendly biographer cannot but admit; and his publication was a very different thing from Mrs. Manley's. There is reason to think that the biographer was in communication with the family of Halifax. His article was the mortuary account of the distinguished statesman, which, in our day, would have been written for the leading newspapers. It was one of the chief authorities for the article on Halifax in the 'Biographia Britannica,' in which it is quoted more than thirty times, the passage above being given at length, and fully relied on. And this biographer, whose account was printed in 1760, stands to the time of his narration as we, in 1866, stand to 1821. Men of sixty-five were adults when Halifax died. The signature to the article is 'P'; but I am not aware that these signatures can now be identified. The signature to 'Newton' is also 'P'; but from that article it does not even appear that Newton had a niece. No trace of any contradiction exists: none by Newton on behalf of his niece; none by the husband whom she afterwards married, not even in the memoranda which he left, though those memoranda, as we have seen, mention *twenty* years where thirty want explanation; none by

the niece herself when she furnished notes for her uncle's life to Fontenelle, though she must have been aware of the charges made against that uncle on her account; none by her daughter or her daughter's husband, when Voltaire gave the worst version of the story to Europe in an innuendo, which has all the force of an assertion that the thing was well known. I may add that the story has been generally credited, to the extent of the biographer's fact, namely, that Miss Barton did live in Halifax's house. The suppression of Newton's biographers has given consent. Sir D. Brewster, in his *first* life of Newton, allows this passage, for he uses some of its words, to prove that Halifax was strongly attached to Miss Barton, but suppresses the main point, as follows (p. 250).

'This accomplished nobleman was created Earl of Halifax in 1700, and after the death of his first [why first?—what was lurking in the author's mind in 1831?] wife he conceived a strong attachment for Mrs. Catherine Barton, the widow of Colonel Barton [this mistake has been rectified in our own day], and the niece of Newton. This lady was young, gay, and beautiful, and though she did not escape the censures of her contemporaries, she was regarded by those who knew her as a woman of strict honour and virtue. We are not acquainted with the causes which prevented her union with the Earl of Halifax . . .'

The biographer of Halifax opens his paragraph in a curious way, near the end of his work.

'I am now,' he says, 'to account for another omission in the course of this history, which is that of the death of Lord Halifax's lady, upon whose decease his lordship took a resolution of living a single life thenceforward, and cast his eye upon the widow . . . (as before).'

The truth slips out: the biographer is not to supply an omission, but to 'account for' it. It may be matter of wonder that the story was mentioned at all; there was no occasion for it. Reason for the insertion seems to have arisen while the work was in preparation: perhaps the curiosity which the legacies had excited, and the stories set afloat about their cause, accompanied, of course, by much revival of the slanderous stories in the *Eginardus*. It may be suspected that it was at first intended to leave it to be supposed that Halifax had had a wife who lasted his life, that it was found this would not do, and that the omission was rectified and further information given. I suppose the writer got into confusion; and that, being in communication with Halifax's nephew and successor, and perhaps some more of the relatives, *the widow included*, too many cooks spoiled the broth. It is important to remember that the biographer and his advisers, aware of the slanderous statement which had been made, had a case which was actually before the public to meet. His statement seems to admit a good deal, even when looked on by those who know nothing of Mrs. Manley. But as the answer —such it must be held to be—to the positive assertions which had been allowed to circulate for five years, it is either full admission or a way of insinuating a private marriage. That is, the housekeeper story is full admission, unless the description of the lady's untarnished character in the mind of those who knew her be held declaration of a private marriage.

From Miss Barton being mentioned, as widow of

Colonel Barton, it may be supposed that she had passed under the character of a widow. That she had lived in Halifax's house is clear; and no one will suppose that she left her old uncle, who wanted a housekeeper as much as Halifax, to be nothing but housekeeper to the peer. Nor will anyone imagine that the niece of an affluent member of Parliament, with £200 a year of her own for life, bought for her by the old uncle with whom until then she had lived, being also young, beautiful, and gay, would hire herself to a fashionable bachelor as the superintendent of his establishment. The bare fact has only one construction, if no marriage be supposed; namely, that of John Nichols, in his edition of Swift: 'In her widowhood she was entertained by Lord Halifax, who was very liberal to her at his death?' The word *entertained* is a genteel word; in French—*entretenue*.

That Halifax was her admirer in 1703, appears from his verses contributed to the inscriptions on the *toasting-glasses* of the Kit-cat Club. This club not only gave its name to the pictures still so called, but, by report, first gave the name of *toast* to any beauty whose health was often drunk. It seems to have been quite forgotten that the fair toasts were originally attached to the clubs by a kind of official tie. 'I shall likewise mark out every toast, the club in which she was elected, and the number of votes that were on her side.'—(*Guardian*, 1713, No. 107.)

These verses are omitted in some editions of the British poets, but they agree in character and metre

with those which are always inserted, as by Halifax, in honour of other ladies.

> 'Stampt with her reigning charmes, this brittle glass
> Will safely through the realms of Bacchus pass;
> Full fraught with beauty, will new flames impart,
> And mount her shining image in the heart.'

These are very poor; but the following, which appear with them in the 'Toasters,' from which the 'Biographia Britannica' quotes, are so exceedingly bad that it may be charitably hoped that they were forgeries, made in ridicule, at the time when the pair were the talk of the town.

> 'Beauty and wit strove each in vain
> To vanquish Bacchus and his train;
> But Barton, with successful charms,
> From both their quivers drew her arms:
> The roving god his sway resigns,
> And cheerfully submits his vines.'

Halifax, it is well known, was Pope's Bufo: he is here Bavius as well. I hope that Macaulay, who describes the verses made by Halifax for the glasses as 'neatly turned,' spoke of the series from which the last-quoted couplets were omitted. Not to omit any excuse, let us remember that Pope had not then taught versification and driven out the smaller epigram.

I now come to the death of Halifax, and to the point which settles the matter, to me, most conclusively. I had brought the evidence, in my own mind, to the conviction that the private marriage was the most probable alternative; and had so stated it. There is no use in presenting a result as only the more probable; the

biographer of Newton, and most of his reviewers, took me to have maintained the marriage as proved. I did not do so then; I do so now, meaning by *proved* what is meant by that word in the jury-box, not in the mathematical lecture-room. All mathematicians make this distinction; but many physical philosophers, and all that part of general society which imitates their methods, are wholly unable to keep it in mind.

In 1856, my friend Mr. Libri showed me, merely as an autograph, a letter written by Newton which he had bought at a sale. At the first glance I saw the words which I have placed in italics. About the handwriting there can be no question: Halifax died on the 19th of the month.

'Leicester Fields, *May* 23, 1715.

'Sir John,

'I am concerned that I must send an excuse for not waiting upon you before your journey into Lincolnshire. The concern I am in for the loss of my Lord Halifax, and the *circumstances in which I stand related to his family*, will not suffer me to go abroad till his funeral is over. And therefore I can only send this letter to wish you and your lady and family a good journey into Lincolnshire, and all health and happiness during your stay there. And upon your first return to London I will wait upon you, and endeavour by frequenter visits to make amends for the defect of them at present.

'I am, Sir,

'Your most humble and most obedient servant,

'Isaac Newton.'

This letter was sold by Christie and Manson in 1856, being lot 938 of H. Belward Ray's sale. It was described as part of a quantity of papers connected with Newton, purchased by the late Thomas Rodd, a very

good critic in such matters, as all know who remember him. Some of these papers are in the hands of the Rev. H. T. Ellacombe (*Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, iii. 173). Lord Monson says (3rd series, i. 191), 'When the late Mr. Rodd, the bookseller, died, he left a vast quantity of Newton papers, which were dispersed by auction. I have myself many volumes of these letters, and other documents.' But this does not account for all. I hope both Mr. Ellacombe and Lord Monson will carefully examine these papers.

The address of the above letter is wanting; but Sir John, of Lincolnshire, must have been Sir John Newton, whom in other letters Isaac Newton calls his kinsman. As we know not what other letters there may be in existence, or where—for Rodd's collection did not come from Newton's immediate family—it may be worth while to describe the receiver of the letter. John Newton, of Barr's Court in Gloucestershire, was created a baronet in 1660, with remainder, after direct heirs, to John Newton, of Gunwarley (or Gunnerly) in Lincolnshire. This second John Newton succeeded in 1661, and married a daughter of Sir Jervase Eyre, of Rampton, Nottinghamshire. He died in 1699, and was succeeded by his son John, the receiver of the letter. This third baronet married, first, Miss Heveringham; secondly, a daughter of Sir Michael Wharton, of Beverley, by whom he had a son, Michael, who succeeded his father in 1734. This Michael Newton, already *Sir* Michael as a knight of the Bath, was chief mourner at Isaac Newton's funeral; which means that

the Lincolnshire baronet considered himself, and was acknowledged, by the executors, to be Newton's *chief*, as the Scotch call it.

When, in 1867, the *Pascal Letters* were brought forward at the French Institute, Sir D. Brewster asserted in the *Athenæum*, that the full name *Isaac*, occurring in Newton's signature, was a strong presumption of forgery; that he could only recollect one instance in which there was anything but 'Is. Newton.' The letters are obvious forgeries; but Sir D. Brewster should not have trusted his memory. Whenever Newton is emphatically on form, as he is in the above letter, he is 'Isaac.' To his especial friends, Keill, Halley, and Flamsteed, he is generally 'Sir . . . Is. Newton.' But when he is on high form, he lengthens both ends. It is 'Dr. Keill . . . Isaac Newton.' When he writes a very important letter on the fluxional dispute, it is 'Dr. Halley . . . Isaac Newton.' When he asks the Astronomer Royal, almost officially, for calculations, and this to his old and dear friend, after fifty years of acquaintance, it is 'Mr. Flamsteed . . . Isaac Newton,' on two occasions, when summoning Flamsteed to a meeting of the referees on the catalogue. Not that the letter ceases to be private personal communication; in both cases Flamsteed is asked to stay and dine. In one case Cotes gets 'Isaac' at the end of a *short* letter—in several cases length alone seems to produce it—but then the letter ends with a very emphatic request, quite a demand that he may not see any more of Cotes's preface; he does not want any responsi-

bility for what may be said about the dispute on fluxions. Flamsteed gets 'Isaac' in another letter; but this one ends with expressions of strong obligation. Great people get 'Isaac,' as the Duc d'Aumont and the Lords of the Treasury.

The full name is either formality or emphasis; and the letter to Sir John Newton is both formal and emphatic. But it is rare; it does not come, I should think, so often as one time in ten; and when it does come, I think there is always an explanation.

It now appears that there were *circumstances* in which Newton stood related to the *family* of Halifax, known to Sir John Newton, which were worthy of being given as reasons for keeping the house after the funeral, side by side with the grief of Newton at the loss of his old friend. The intimacy of Newton and Halifax had been long and close; for thirty-five years they had been, not only friends, but associated in occupation and in locality. From the time when they made a joint attempt to found a Philosophical Society at Cambridge, through parliamentary and official life both had been in different parts of one career. And the vigour of their friendship resisted the dangerous change of position by which the undergraduate and junior fellow, who looked up to the unrivalled mathematician in the seat of learning, became the Minister of State who looked down upon the official subordinate in the public service. Permanence of warm personal regard under such a trial is rare; and to abate wonder it must be remembered that the change was not sudden; there was an interval of social equality in the

Convention Parliament. All the records in existence would not enable us to approximate to the time at which Montague passed Newton. The great reason known to the world in all its completeness, the singular friendship of thirty-five years' duration, was quite enough; there was no occasion to judge a second reason to prove to a Lincolnshire baronet that he ought not to be offended at the omission of a visit of ceremony. And Newton was not the man to do it; in the expression of matters connected with feeling he was plain and brief, easy to see through, and wholly destitute of finesse. (N.B. I never for a moment believed in the letter* to Lady Norris.) The second reason, then, must have been one of weight resembling the first, and joining it with what goes before, and with what is to come, it must mean that Sir John Newton knew that Isaac Newton's niece was Halifax's widow.

But might not Newton have had some very intimate relations with Halifax's next-of-kin? On this point I must be very distinct. No one, until he comes to try at the establishment of a new point, can be fully aware of the wildness with which even practised reasoners conduct argument on any subject which has not had its own groove cut in the thinking machinery. Newton and the new Lord Halifax had to adjust the transfer of Miss Barton's annuity, which Halifax held in trust. Here was a *circumstance* relating Newton to the *family* of Halifax; and I have had it gravely put that it was

* A letter given by Sir David Brewster, in which Sir I. Newton proposed marriage to Lady Norris, a rich widow.—Ed.

the circumstance which kept him in the house, or helped to keep him there, until after the funeral; or at least that it *might* have been. The proposer, certainly, was very much bent on my being wrong; but, as many of my readers may be in the same plight, I state all I have been able to collect about the possibilities of Newton having been acquainted with the family of Halifax.

As follows:—Halifax had nephews and nieces; we must take it as of the highest probability that Newton used to speak to and shake hands with them; and I should not venture to find fault with any one who declared that they sometimes—nay, often—dined at his house. But there is no direct evidence that Newton ever spoke a word to, or set eyes on, any one of them. Newton had a friend named Laughton or Lawton; Halifax mentions nieces of this name in his will. Some trifling circumstances make it not very improbable that Newton's friend was the relative of Halifax's nieces. The Hon. Dr. Montague, Halifax's uncle, was actually Master of Trinity College during part of Newton's residence. And this is all I can find.

I suppose it will be conceded that if the words of Newton's letter refer to the connection between Halifax and his niece, under the name of his 'family,' these words establish a marriage. If it were anything else, whether Newton were a conniving party or not, we may be certain he would not refer to it. The times were bad, but not bad enough for this.

To my sins of digression I will add the following. It will be seen how coldly Newton addresses his

kinsman—'Sir John . . . I am, sir, your most humble and obedient servant.' Having always looked curiously at the forms of old correspondence, I have come to a clearness that the most ceremonious civility was never an offence, but rather the contrary; and that all departure was real feeling, ungoverned by rule. *Dear* Sir was not a form. Thus Newton, when his thoughts were turned upon his friend and his niece, does not give his relative the smallest remission of ceremony; but in another letter to Sir John Newton, written under different circumstances, we find 'Your affectionate kinsman and most humble servant.'* In aid of my theory I observe that, in the great majority of cases in which the mode of address varies, the relaxation is at the beginning, and it has subsided into ceremony by the end. Sam Johnson sometimes begins to his step-daughter with 'Dearest Dear,' and ends with 'Madam, your most humble servant.' Mixtures of address are exceedingly common; thus Robert Boyle is Lady Ranelagh's 'Affectionate brother and most humble servant.'

Brook Taylor ends to one sister with 'Pray give my affectionate respects to my sisters, and accept the same most cordially from your obedient servant.' In a letter previously quoted, Swift is 'Sir' to his constant solicitor, sincere admirer, and unalterable friend, who is also his 'most obedient and most humble servant.' But one of the most amusing instances which I ever met with is the way in which the author of 'Woman's

* This was a letter of 1707, written to recommend an undertaker for the funeral of a distant relation of both parties.]

Revenge' (1718) subsides into ceremony after a flash of most familiar quizzing in a letter to his brother-actor, James Spiller. It commences with 'Dear Jemmy;' and the writer, after congratulating his friend upon the success with which he had acted a Newgate bird in the piece, ends as follows:

'And you must not think I flatter you when I tell you you have a natural impudence, proper to the character, and became your fetters as well as any who ever wore them. And I am sorry I could not, without giving offence to the critics, and deviating too far from the rules of comedy, bring you to Tyburn for the better diversion of the audience; but I hope you are satisfied with my good wishes, and will give me leave to subscribe myself, your obliged humble servant,

'CHRISTOPHER BULLOCK.'

When the last will of Lord Halifax was opened, it was found that Catherine Barton had a very handsome jointure—as I call it—left her. There was a second codicil, dated February 1, 1712-13, intended to revoke the original bequest, and leaving her £5,000 absolutely, the rangership, lodge (a *curious house*, Flamsteed calls it), and household furniture of Bushey Park for life, and the manor of Apscourt for life. Common rumour valued the legacy at £20,000; meaning—to put it at the lowest—that it considered her to have as good as the interest of that sum for her life. We should probably be below the mark if we put this income, exclusive of her annuity of £200, at £1,200 a year. The preceding generation valued income at 10 per cent. of the capital; when Chillingworth told his hearers that heaven was worth more than a hundred thousand pounds, he added,

this you all know is ten thousand pounds a year. Miss Barton, then—so to call her—was left with £1,400 a year; more than the income on which a country gentleman of that time often thought of trying to represent his county. Macaulay, speaking of Congreve having £1,200 a year, says that as an income for a single man this was not merely easy, but splendid; and he puts the average income of a member of the House of Commons in the time of Charles II. at £800 a year. The estimate above is given by Flamsteed, two months after Halifax's death, as the common notion of the whole. He puts £20,000 as exclusive of the bequest in money (£5,000); but as he clearly does not understand that the £3,000 of the first codicil is revoked, I take it he would have put the whole, had he understood the matter well, at not less than £20,000.

The detail of the legacy is very significant. If, as the biographer of Newton would have it, she had always lived, and was to live on, with her uncle, why should a man who was very rich in money as well as land have burdened her with Bushey Lodge and another manor, with all the cares of a rangership, of finding a tenant for the lodge, and of managing landed estate?

All this would best have devolved upon the heir, and a round sum of £20,000, or a life interest in it, would very visibly have been the better way of providing for Miss Barton. The legacy seems intended to give her the status which she might have expected, had she been an acknowledged widow.

The legacy was left in terms which, supposing

Catherine Barton not his wife, would make any man think that Halifax had attempted to represent her as his mistress. 'It was given,' he says, 'as a token of the sincere love, affection, and esteem I have long had for her person, and as a small recompense for the pleasure and happiness I have had in her conversation.' This was said of a woman whom the scandalous part of the world called his mistress, as he knew; and, as if to make the worst part of the scandal more prominent, he describes her as Newton's niece, and leaves Newton £100 'as a mark of the great honour and esteem I have for so great a man.' And he is careful to specify that the annuity—the most suspicious of the gifts—was *bought in Newton's name.*

In 1706, Halifax left a legacy for 'love and affection;' in 1712 he added 'the pleasure and happiness I have had in her *conversation.*' When I began this inquiry, I very much under-estimated the force of this one word. I thought that *discourse* or *colloquy* was *one* of its meanings; but I cannot find a single instance in which it refers to this and no more. It now naturally slips in, and becomes a substitute whenever colloquy occurs, or a synonym. I have had quoted against me more than once, 'Let your *conversation* be Yea, yea,' etc., and have been obliged to refer my opponents to the version itself, in which they found, 'Let your *communication* be,' etc., etc. In our day we converse with persons, and are conversant with things; and there is a plural, *conversations:* in older English there is no distinction between *conversing with* and being *conversant with;* both apply

to persons as well as to things; and *conversation* has no more a plural than *conduct*. The old phrase of 'conversing with books' is the invention of a time when to 'converse with' was what we now call to 'be conversant with.' It would otherwise have been a very absurd idiom; we may make Aristotle talk to us, but how are we to talk to Aristotle? The grand old Greek is now, as Madame de Stael said of Coleridge to Crabb Robinson, tremendous at monologue, but incapable of dialogue.

Before giving a list of instances from many quarters, I will produce one from that prince of English vernacular who is, of all, most destitute of the power of setting foot outside his own domain; I mean John Bunyan. From many uses of the word, all of one kind, I select those which occur in the description of *Talkative*, the pilgrim who is all good profession and bad practice, and in whom Bunyan gives the exquisitely funny illustration that he is an unclean beast, because, though he may chew the cud, *i.e.*, may seek knowledge, he does not divide the hoof, *i.e.*, does not part with the way of sinners. It will be seen that *talk* and *conversation* are used as we use *profession* and practice. As in, 'Religion hath no place in his heart, or house, or *conversation;* all he hath lieth in his *tongue*.' The 'heart, house, and *conversation*' are several times repeated in the same sense, as in 'I have heard many *cry out* against *sin* in the pulpit, who yet can abide it well enough in the heart, house, and *conversation*. Again, 'To say I am thus and thus, when my *conversation* and all my neigh-

bours tell me I lie, is great wickedness. Again, 'I have heard of you that you are a man whose religion lies in *talk*, and that your *conversation* gives your profession the lie.' Not only does Bunyan mean *conduct*, but he has no other word for *conduct* and *behaviour* except *conversation*. But it does not follow that this exclusive sense lasted through a generation; many of the following instances will speak to that point.

In no one of the twenty instances, or thereabouts, in which the word occurs in the authorized version of the Bible (1611) does conversation mean only colloquy; it always refers to the mode of conducting life. The origin of the Latin *conversatio* obviously gives for the first meaning 'a turning again and again;' and this is also the idea in ἀναστροφη, which is translated *conversation* in the authorized version thirteen times. These words come to mean the habit of conducting life, but have no especial reference to colloquy. There is the same idea in πολιτευμα and τροπος, both of which are sometimes translated *conversation*. But no word is so rendered which has more to do with a man's talking than with his eating, or walking, or trade.

As between two persons, it was meeting, eating together, having common places and objects, all, of course, with communication. As between man and woman, it generally implied the conjugal relation, the living together, with or without legal sanction, as the case might be. Edward Phillips, Milton's nephew, in his 'World of Words' (1657), makes conversation to be 'a keeping company with, or being familiar with, any; and

he gives no other meaning. Littleton, in his English-Latin Dictionary (4th edition, 1715), renders conversation by 'conversatio, commercium, consuetudo, usus.' This word began in later Latin, in which the meaning was, as may be gathered from St. Jerome, when he mentions those who have presumed 'indigna nomine Christiano de mea conversatione jactitare;' or from St. Valerian, where he says, 'In hoc solum constat conversationis nostræ ratio, ut boni simus.' And the original meaning is strongly illustrated by the old technical meaning in theology, the monastic life.

Newton, writing to Collins in 1673, speaking of some rudeness he had met with at the Royal Society, says he will 'decline that conversation which hath occasioned what is past.'

John Hawkins, in the English Dictionary to which he forged the name of Cocker (1704, 1715), has the following, which shows that the illiterate man has no more notion of restriction to colloquy than the well-read Phillips.' '*Conversation* [Latin], one who is *conversant*, or keeps company.'*

Very frequently, of course, the word used generically will still make sense in a specific meaning. Thus when Strype says that the conversation of two of his worthies was so wise and useful that they were called the golden couple of fathers, he speaks intelligibly to those who make him mean only their discourse or colloquy, though he does not mean their whole course of conduct. Lord

* Cole ('English Dictionary,' 1724) has 'Conversation: *a being conversant, keeping company.*'

Clarendon says of Waller that he is himself a wit, and 'of an intimate conversation' with other wits; here the word is used in the whole meaning. But when the same Clarendon speaks of the same Waller, to extol him for 'the excellence and power of his wit and pleasantness of his conversation,' he might be taken as speaking of his discourse only; though since wit is an important part of communication, it is rather loose phraseology. The reader will find, if he looks through all my instances, and gets some more of his own, that no two words are more alike than *conversation* at the time I write of (1600, 1730 . . .), and *companionship* now. In the 'Secret History of the Calves' Head Club,' 1713, all the objects of blame are the eating of the calves' heads and singing blasphemous anthems; which behaviour is called 'scandalous and contemptible conversation.' Bacon is often quoted as saying that reading, writing, and *conversation* severally make the full, exact, and ready man; but his word is *conference*. Selden's famous book is 'Table-talk, being *Discourses* . . .' Swift's 'Polite Conversation,' already quoted, is 'a complete collection of genteel and ingenious conversation, according to the most polite method now used at Court, and in the best companies of England.' It is all talk, because talk is the only part of conversation that, without pictures, can be reproduced in type. But his own words for the body of his work are *discourses* and *dialogues*, never *conversations*—a plural which he does not know. And he is to improve and polish all '*parts* of conversation,' that is, as he describes it, of behaviour

at meetings in the streets, dinner, tea, etc. And we have seen that, even in the slipshod English of his journal, he does not complain of whiggish conversation, but of *discourse*. We have lost both *discourse* and *dialogue*, except as very high and serious terms. In French, the Academy gives no meaning to *conversation*, except *entretien familier;* and *entretien*, though colloquy, in a derived sense, is the *treatment* or *carrying-on*. Shakespeare, whose use of the word will be found to support what I have said, makes Othello complain that, being a black, he is deficient in some 'parts of conversation.' This does not mean that he fails in participles though he succeeds in verbs; or the like: and it comes of his blackness, which puts no difficulty in the way of colloquial correctness. Molière's *précieuse* does, indeed, call to a servant for a chair, by the title of 'la commodité de la conversation;' but she twists all her phrases, and may very easily be made to mean companionship, and not colloquy.

This is enough to show that Halifax meant more than talk; what more is a fair question, but still more: he meant some kind of companionship. If he only meant that he had constantly associated with Miss Barton in the house of her uncle, he used a disrespectful ambiguity of phrase which he had no right to use, any more than a single man who had frequently talked to—and even flirted with—a young lady in her mother's house, would now have a right to say that his connexion with that young lady had been a great source of happiness. Had he wanted to describe Miss Barton as

having been to him a wife or a mistress, he could not have found a more expressive way of doing it, or one more sure to be so taken by common usage; and he applied this word to a lady whom the gay world had called his mistress, whilst leaving her a large fortune.

Flamsteed underlined this word in a letter which Baily has published with the rest, and to which I have already referred.

He had sore recollections connected with Newton, and the support which Halifax had given Newton; his inuendo would prove nothing but this, that all which was wanted to show his meaning was merely to underline that word. The passage is as follows: (July 9, 1715)

'I doubt not but you have heard that the Lord Halifax is dead of a violent fever If common fame be true, he died worth £150,000; out of which he gave Mrs. Barton, Sir I. Newton's niece, for her *excellent conversation*, a curious house, £5,000, with lands, jewels, plate, money, and household furniture, to the value of £20,000, or more. Sir I. Newton loses his support in him, and having been in with Lord Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Dr. Arbuthnott, is not now looked upon as he was formerly."

It has always been to me rather a matter of surprise that we find nothing more on this subject in Flamsteed's letters. He and Newton were on very bitter terms; hard words had passed between them; and Flamsteed is not sparing of acrimonious assertions. It may possibly be that he came to hear that a marriage had taken place. When the biography of Halifax appeared, the following words would certainly provoke inquiry " . . . though she might be agreeable to his lordship in every

particular, that noble peer's complaisance to her proceeded wholly from the great esteem he had for her wit and most excellent understanding, as will appear from what relates to her in his will at the close of these memoirs.' No man with a grain of sense, looking at the codicil, could see any declaration that the legacies were *only* given for the reasons just alleged: the publication of such a remark as that just quoted can only be explained by reference to the writer's knowledge, that many would understand the bequests in their true sense, and would circulate the true state of the case.*

The Barton family seem to have cherished the connection, whatever it was. The Rev. Geofrey Barton, Catherine's first cousin, called a daughter Catherine (born in 1709) and a son Montague (born 1717); another son was Charles. The Montague family remembered it; for Charles Barton received a living from them.

These are the grounds on which I am satisfied that there was a private marriage between Newton's old friend and his favourite niece contracted in 1706, known and acknowledged in their private circle, but not published to the world. In the following discussion of difficulties and objections, I am not considering them with reference to their bearing on the proof of marriage, but only as those accompaniments to disputed questions which it is well to examine when a point is established,

* In the *Biographia Britannica* (Art. 'Montague'), all Pittis's words and the whole of the codicil are given in large type in the text. This is very significant; for those who know the work would think it five hundred to one that the codicil would have been put in a note, like the first codicil.

as leaning-ground for the settlement of cases yet doubtful. That Halifax gave a life annuity and a legacy at the beginning of a certain term; that during that term, which ended with his life, common rumour asserted Miss Barton to be his mistress; that one of the dearest friends of both never mentions them together, even in his private letters, though often apart; that a friendly biographer, at the moment when general attention would be directed to Halifax by his recent death, declares that Miss Barton managed his house, and was a woman of honour; that a large fortune was left her, in terms which, as used by a person who knew the rumours, contradict nothing and imply much; that the uncle asserts, without the least necessity, that he stood in relation to the *family* of his *friend;* that the term between the annuity and the death of Halifax, the period of currency of the scandalous rumours, is, precisely enough, the length of time during which the second husband's evidence shows she did not live with her uncle;—all these things make a case which will not be permanently resisted.

The difficulties are: How comes there to be no concurrent rumour of a marriage, assuming that there was no such rumour because we know of none, which I am content to assume *against* myself? How came it that Halifax did not acknowledge the marriage in his will, or by other paper left to be opened at his death? How came it that Mr. Conduitt did not proclaim the marriage after he had married the widow? How came it that he left no note of it in the family memoranda of which so

much use has been made? These were all grounds of suspense until Newton's letter was found.

That letter at once turned many opinions. Lord Macaulay, to whose teeming memory I owe my first information that Swift mentions Miss Barton—a fact unnoticed by all the scientific biographers—was a man of very decided conclusions, not easily shaken: this all know. Lord Lansdowne's (rumoured) gibe, 'I wish I could be as sure of anything as Tom Macaulay is of everything!' resembles the income of half a million so often attributed to the possessor of fifty thousand. But nothing small can be so successfully exaggerated; five hundred never passes for five thousand. And there is another remark to make. The world abounds in people who are positively certain of everything; and, so long as they have nothing in particular to say for themselves, their certainty passes almost unseen. But when a man of many facts, good memory, and power of argument, backs his certainty with a case, his assurance becomes a word of two meanings. His opponent, galled by his reasons, falls foul of the strength of the conclusion, and says, with Jack Cade: 'He shall die an it were but for pleading so well for his life.'

Lord Macaulay was strongly opposed to my whole view until Newton's letter was found, when he at once changed so far—far for him—as to write, 'I do not entirely reject your hypothesis;' he then raises the difficulty of the continued secrecy. I expected that Dean Peacock, in whose mind was a chart of scientific history and biography, would also be more or less turned round;

but I found this could not be done; he was already satisfied; it was his old opinion that there had been a relation between the parties. 'I think your hypothesis,' he writes, 'seems to clear up a difficulty in Newton's life, which has hitherto been inexplicable; no discredit seems to have attached to Miss Barton during her lifetime on account of her connexion with Lord Halifax.' He then raises the same difficulty. Take notice that the *undique collata membra* of the subject had formed the basis of a decided opinion that a relation existed, in the mind of the best-read man in England in the history of science, strong in general literature, and much relied on for soundness of judgment in the affairs of life.* My readers will look with interest at the letter which T. B. Macaulay wrote to me on my forwarding, for his perusal, the manuscript which I had prepared for the *Notes and Queries* (being substantially all but the last column and a half of what appeared on November 5, 1853). Many persons would be suspected of having gone to the book and got up a memory; but those who remember Macaulay's conversation will not entertain any such notion. The letter was dashed off when my paper was returned, very soon after its receipt; there are some slight inaccuracies which recent acquaintance with the book would have prevented.

'I return your paper. It is very interesting; but there are some important facts which seem to have escaped your notice. Mrs.

* Take notice also, that the strong impression which so good a testimony would have made on my mind was no source of assurance to me, for I never knew of Dean Peacock's opinions until my own had been published.

Barton was a most intimate friend of Swift. "I love her better than anybody," is the expression he uses about her in one of his letters to Stella. She is mentioned perhaps twenty times in his journal. He never hints the least suspicion of her virtue; and his regard for her must be supposed to have been very strong since it overcame his party feeling. He was then [not so soon—see what precedes] completely estranged from Halifax, and was the great literary champion of the Tories [he was rapidly becoming so]. Yet he suffered Mrs. Barton to talk Whiggism to him, and seems not to have liked her the less [he complains of it]. She evidently lived at that time, not with Halifax, but in a lady-like manner by herself, seeing the best company, and giving handsome dinners. [We know not who dined with *her* except Swift: she dined at Lady Worsley's and at Lady Betty Germaine's.] I cannot believe [no more can I] that Swift, who, though he had no religion, had a great deal of professional spirit [I have worded this very differently], would have haunted the house, and sate at the table of any man's kept-mistress, above all the kept-mistress of his enemy [enemy to be; as yet, the beloved friend]. But you can look at the letters to Stella, and judge for yourself. Swift mentions the brother, an officer, a sad dog, who was killed in Hill's unlucky expedition to Quebec."

'You must not, I think, say much [I had not said what *I* call much] about the purity of Halifax's morals. He is accused of libertinism by Davenant; and though Davenant was a malignant fellow, and little to be trusted, I do not know that we have the means of refuting the accusation. I am very unwilling to believe that Mrs. Barton was Halifax's mistress; but I cannot think that she was his wife. There was no conceivable reason for his not avowing the marriage, if it had really taken place. There would have been no *mésalliance*. He was a younger son of a younger brother, and had been educated for the Church. [This, and what follows on the same subject, has been already discussed.] Dorset's patronage, and his own abilities, raised him in the world. But in all the lampoons of the time Montague is spoken of as a *parvenu* [unless he accepted the designation, he would all the more fear an unequal marriage]. The sister of a colonel in the army, the niece of a member for the University of Cambridge, was surely a match for any man. [Here is a mine of good puns, not intended, and which

has never been worked.] My own belief is that Mrs. Barton was neither Halifax's mistress nor his wife, and that the *liaison* between them was of the same sort with that between Congreve and Mrs. Bracegirdle, with that between Swift and Stella, with that between Pope and Martha Blount, with that between Cowper and Mrs. Unwin. But, whether it were so or not, I have no doubt it was so considered by Newton, who, sagacious as he was in his own sphere, was the last man in the world to have discovered an amour, if the parties took the most ordinary precautions. With all his genius, he was as simple as a child; and the coldness of his own temperament would have made him slow to believe that others had been led astray by their passions. If anything more occurs to me, I will write again.'

The character given of Newton is the mythical portrait: recent knowledge has recoloured it. He was not a simple-minded man in the sense propounded: he was not like the old philosopher who knocked his foot against a stone while he was looking at the stars. Though not learned in human nature, he was very much the man of the world; he stuck to the main chance, and knew how to make a cast. He took good care of his money, and left a large fortune, though very —even magnificently—liberal on suitable occasions, especially to his family. He was observant of small things, as are all men of suspicious temperament; and he had a strong hatred of immorality, whether in word or deed, which, no doubt, would have turned his acuteness of observation, and his tendency to suspicion, upon anything from which inference could have been drawn. Those who imagine that Newton was always thinking of gravitation might just as well imagine that Wellington was always thinking of strategy. The following de-

scription applies to both. After *this* (the *Principia* or *Waterloo*, according to the person thought of), he lived about forty years, during which his attention to what had been his main pursuit was intermittent and casual, and rather directive of others than executive. He had a new career before him, in which again he was eminently successful; and in the last years of his life he was of all his contemporaries the most famous and the most respected.

I take this opportunity to record the fairness of Macaulay's mind in a matter in which unfairness is neither sin nor shame. I have taken trouble to make small researches for many busy men; but it is not the rule that those for whom I do this will find time to do as much for me. But Macaulay held equal rights to mean *quid pro quo*. He began by asking information from me, which I took pains to give; he took equal pains to return an equivalent when I asked of him. I then began to send him scraps, as I found them, unasked; and this he retorted in kind.

The private reasons which dictated secrecy during Halifax's life might have remained in force after his death; but on this we cannot speculate without knowing those reasons. And we must distinguish between not knowing that the marriage was ever acknowledged, and knowing that it was never acknowledged. Some years ago opponents would have been very vastly tickled if they had been told that they must not infer that Newton never acknowledged any relation because no such thing had been made known; and yet their

laughter would not have annihilated the letter to the Lincolnshire baronet. And it may now be thought likely enough that many other written acknowledgments existed, even from Newton himself. The first half—and more—of the last century was a bad time for biography. The age was corrupt, and was mending; shamelessness was gone, and of this a disposition to hide scandals was the first fruit, while knowledge of past irregularities made it seem better to drop everything than to inquire into anything. A collection of correspondence was most often a muck-heap; and candid biographies, reinforced by documents, were not frequent. The story dropped, and it is not very easy to explain how. But it must be remembered that the period 1715-1745, in which it would most naturally be canvassed, was a period of great political uncertainty, ushered in by one formidable rising, and ended by another.

The nine weeks which followed the death of Halifax was a period of foreboding — of impeachments — of arming to resist insurrection, etc.; at the end of which the Earl of Mar, who actually proclaimed the Pretender four weeks afterwards, was concocting his measures with, as was supposed, about a score of the Scotch peers. The discussion of a private scandal must have been much checked by such a state of public fear.

In England, digressive biography, which investigates disputed points, began with the 'Biographia Britannica,' in 1747; and here the story was revived. But the idea of a legal union was not put forward. In fact, so far

as my reading goes, I am not aware that any writer on the subject, earlier than myself, ever seriously mentioned *marriage* in connection with the two, except Mrs. Manley, who makes Miss Barton claim that justice of Halifax, to which he answers that he will wait until she is less saucy; except, also, as I believe, Newton himself in his letter to Sir John Newton.

When I speak of acknowledgment, I do not mean *public* avowal; it is not credible that such a thing as this should have died out. But suppose that when Conduitt sought the lady's hand, he had thought it advisable, if not for his own sake, for that of his family, to exhibit evidence of the former marriage to those whom it was to concern. Suppose any one of twenty imaginable cases. Laugh at them while you may, you who would have derided the notion of an acknowledgment under the hand of Newton. When the points of the case gain wide publicity, the chances of discovery will be much increased.

The more anyone reads of the social life of the time of Anne, the more will he feel that no inference can be drawn by help of impressions derived from the manners of our own day. The first elements of decency were engaged in a reactive struggle with ungodly brutality, itself a reaction against the godly brutality of the Puritans. The reigning school of life delighted to call itself 'The Town'; just as all the vice and all the meanness which is now tolerated delights to call itself 'The World.' There was a great deal of religion afloat, but it was, in all ranks, much tinctured by a principle

of relaxation which prevails in our own day, but is never expressly brought forward. That principle may be illustrated by an anecdote of which the date has no internal evidence. A gentleman had a qualm of conscience in reference to a duel he was going to fight. Being a sound Churchman, as became a duellist—the dissenter had very imperfect notions of the beauty of the institution—he consulted his clergyman. The spiritual guide let him off easily. 'Rely upon it, sir,' said he, 'God Almighty will take a practical view of the exigencies of a gentleman's position'!

Few men of fashion could bear the satire of the coffee-house gang, which may have formed the larger part of genteel society, but which at any rate, by its noise and impudence, appeared to be the larger part. Nothing was so ridiculous, so utterly below a man of condition, as an unequal marriage. The braver spirits, whom the rest had the virtue to admire, though not always the courage to imitate, held that, failing the possibility of inducing a woman to dispense with marriage, none but a mean-spirited fellow would have recourse to a legal tie, when a private ceremony and witnesses ready for absconsion (we must have the word, unless we accept from America *absquatulation* and *skedaddlement*) or perjury could be got for money. An English nobleman, who died in 1702, had found himself unable to seduce a beautiful actress; he accordingly offered marriage; the ceremony was performed by his trumpeter in a clerical dress, and witnessed by his kettle-drummer. This worthy lord was the privy councillor of several

sovereigns in succession, the premier Earl of England, the hereditary Lord High Chamberlain, and the twentieth and last of the De Veres of Oxford, the longest and one of the best of the lines which have interwoven themselves into our history. But this, it may be said, was exceptional. Have not the annals of our own day shown the exposure in a court of law of a common cheat in a person from whom such conduct would have been as little expected as De Vere's baseness from the premier earl? As another instance, then, take the story revived not long ago of the gallant Earl of Peterborough. Eccentricity should, one would think, have preserved this man—of whom Pope said that he would neither live nor die like any other mortal—from fear of the world's wit, at least when fired only at his memory. But there was the greatest difficulty to induce him to acknowledge, on his death-bed, his marriage with the public singer who had charmed him. This is the recent revival: another account—which may also be true—is, that he made the avowal years before at Bath, by privately directing his footman to announce, before a large assembly, 'Lady Peterborough's carriage,' to the great surprise, though not at all to the information of all present, including the lady herself.

I have given the special reason why Halifax should be more afraid than another of public ridicule in such a matter. The real difficulty, and I say it quite in earnest, is to explain how the wits did not, in any case, circulate and insist upon the story of a marriage which

would, especially as a second marriage, have given a better laugh against one whom they did their best to appear to despise. If the lady and her uncle had been their objects of assault, they might have done as they did; but they feathered Halifax's cap in their own minds when they made him the conqueror of the niece of his old friend, the great Newton. The easiest way out of the difficulty is, that the marriage was known or suspected, and that slanderers might decide, after deliberation, that the false story was the best way of vexing the statesman, much as it might go against their hearts and their principles to treat a seducer as such with ridicule.

I never thought anything of the difficulty that Halifax did not acknowledge a marriage in his will, or in some other mortuary paper. Few put into writing what they most especially desire to keep secret during their lives; they know that a robbery, an unfaithful servant, and accidents of many kinds may reveal the whole matter. Those who consider the marriage proved, may think that Halifax did, in his codicil, give something as near to an acknowledgment as he could trust to the accidents aforesaid; and this especially when it is considered how explicitly he connected all that he said with the name of Newton. He proclaims that his *conversation* with Newton's niece has Newton's *sanction;* that Newton had lent his name to the annuity and to all connected with it.

We cannot fully estimate all the possible reasons of the *continued* secrecy, without a consideration of the

state of the marriage law; and this is a subject which in the bulk is known to very few except those who have made especial inquiry. All who can look back before 1836 remember the fight which was made to retain one of the last badges of inferiority which marked the Non-conformist. No valid marriage, except between Quakers and Jews, could be contracted in England otherwise than according to the form of the Establishment, no matter how much the doctrines expressed or implied in that form might offend the parties contracting. It was not to be wondered at that many of the established clergy should feel that, so long as the law continued, the necessity and reality of marriage would reflect a sort of distinctive necessity and reality on the state form of religion, as compared with others; and there were to be found those who were wicked and foolish enough to try to deter women from availing themselves of the change in the law by calling them bad names, or at least by denying their good ones. Such a clergyman, a man of spiteful career, declared that no 'honest woman' would marry by civil contract, and deliberately published the sermon in which he uttered this and other malignant ejaculations. It will be remembered with amusement that the Unitarians assumed what the Scotch call liberty to add and eke, and were married 'in the name of the Father I protest against the Father, and of the Son I protest,' etc., etc. This protest tempts to a digression. It was often presented in writing, which was a more judicious mode. For it is to be remembered that the alternative was not inability to contract

marriage, but the inconvenience of a journey to Scotland. The logic of both sides was amusing; both forgot that the objectionable form was often, perhaps most often, employed by Unitarians themselves in baptism. This seems to be clear from the advice given by Priestley in 1786, being at the period in which the protesters of 1820 were baptized. He says: 'It is to be hoped that the Unitarians of the present age will imitate their predecessors by baptizing, as the apostles did, in the name of Christ only, without invocation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or expressing what they apprehend to be the real meaning of that phraseology.' The orthodox did not produce the actual use of the form by Unitarians, as showing that those Unitarians were ready in their own sense to use the phrase to which they objected; and the Unitarians, in objecting to the form, because those who used it meant to imply the Trinity of persons, conceded to the officiating clergyman a right of interpretation. They should have taken Priestley's advice, as given about baptism. If a general council of the sect had promulgated a declaration that in marriage the Unitarians would receive and use the words in the meaning of Jesus Christ, leaving the officiating minister to his own construction, Athanasian, Platonic, Hindoo, or any other, they would, without more than a fair slap of retort upon what is now admitted to have been a paltry and unhandsome attempt to force conformity, have done much to hasten the relief which they obtained in 1836. What I have here to do with what precedes is to recall that there was an almost

universal belief that marriage had in all Christian time been essentially an ecclesiastical ceremony, except in Scotland and in France since the first revolution. And yet many old persons, holding that belief, must have been the offspring of marriages which were not made in churches, and at which the presence and assistance of a person in orders was merely the pleasure of the parties. For, until the Act of George II., marriage was in law a civil contract, and the system, which fell in 1836, had existed no more than eighty-two years.

The old law of Christendom declares that a valid marriage is a contract between man and woman; and it requires simply that they should be able to contract, willing to contract, and that they *should* contract. If either of the parties deny the contract, it must be proved against him or her; as by witnesses who heard the declaration: if both admit the contract—and cohabitation under the name of man and wife was admission—this is proof that there *was* a contract. This is substantially the Scotch law in our own day, and it was the law of Europe. This is *God's ordinance*, and it is the law of nature, too, for man is a monogamous animal, and does not avail himself, as a rule, of the right of polygamy or of divorce, however free he may be to use them. I am told that the abolition of polygamy begins to be agitated among the Mormonites themselves.

Marriage, then, was a contract, no more and no less; in most countries clerical influence superadded the notion that no such contract was a proper contract unless it were ratified by a church and performed in a

mode dictated by a church. A long volume, of many chapters, might be written on the consequences of this unwarrantable change in the meaning of a word; on the hundreds of thousands of adulteries and bigamies which it has produced; on the manner in which it has set conscience, where conscience exists, at work upon false meanings and false distinctions. The churches, one and all, as was their duty, enforced by every spiritual means the propriety of lending to the most solemn of human contracts the most solemn form of execution; but never, *in old times*, was a church foolish enough to deny that marriage was marriage in any case. Irregular marriages were subjects of spiritual censure, but they were binding. The religious tendencies of mankind led strongly towards the notion of religious ceremony being an *essential* of the contract, and the old churches, far from aiding, resisted this. The whole history of *precontract* is the history of the care which was taken that a new marriage, or pretence of marriage, fortified by the sanction of religious form, should not supervene upon a real and previous civil marriage. The Council of Trent, in enacting that a priest must be one of the *witnesses* of a marriage, made the first innovation, but the decrees of this Council are not received throughout the whole of the Roman Church.

But some readers may ask how the pure civil contract could be a sacrament. They might as well ask how lay baptism could be a sacrament. The sacrament was, by its own nature, held to be in existence in the contract between Christians; the phrase is, I have been informed,

that in baptism, etc., the baptizer *gives* the sacrament, but that in matrimony the parties *give* the sacrament to each other. What I had collected on this matter need not be detailed: if we allow the Pope to be a sufficient expounder of his own system, the question is settled by the encyclical letter of 1864, and if not, this is a matter on which I am willing to err with the Pope.

In the catalogue of errors which is appended to that document, it is declared false to say that 'the sacrament of marriage is only an adjunct to the contract, from which it is separable, and that it only consists in the nuptial benediction,' *i.e.*, in the priestly share of the matter. And the reader may amuse himself by reading the following involution of four negations: The Pope says it is *false* to say that it is *false* that the contract is *null* if the sacrament do *not* exist. We can now see how the Roman system formerly acknowledged, among its sacraments, the mere declaration of parties made by words *de præsenti* before witnesses, no one of whom was in orders.

As to England, with which we are now concerned. I have more than once heard it denied by clergymen that marriage was ever a civil contract: very common books would have prevented so simple a mistake. In the very year in which Halifax married Miss Barton, Chief Justice Holt (Wigmore's case, Salkeld, vol. ii. p. 437) laid it down as the law of England, that a contract *per verba de præsenti* is a marriage; and also *per verba de futuro*, if the parties afterwards live together. The churches, as above noted, never denied that irregular

marriage was marriage. When *informal* or *irregular* marriages were prosecuted in the ecclesiastical courts, the irregularity was punishable by excommunication, but the marriage was neither void nor voidable. And it may be questioned whether any ecclesiastical censure involving penalty could be directed against a purely civil marriage, if the parties employed no clergyman at all. When Archbishop Whitgift proceeded against Sir Edward Coke for celebrating his marriage in a private house without banns or license, the *clergyman* was also prosecuted. The lawyer made submission, and pleaded ignorance; for excommunication in those days had other inconveniences besides payment of costs. Much remark was made upon Coke's plea of ignorance; but in all probability it was genuine; the common lawyer might well have been without the knowledge of an almost disused ecclesiastical canon. Coke was a strong churchman, and, what is more, a strong Cokist, he was not likely to give wilful offence to the system which he favoured, and by which he hoped to be favoured. The modern way of prohibiting illegal marriages, inaugurated by the very act of George II. is by making them null and void—no marriages at all. But in old time they would no more have thought of this way out of the difficulty, than they would have tried to prevent stealing of apples, by declaring that all round esculent balls, taken from an apple-tree without consent of the owner, were no apples at all. The Attorney-General Ryder, in introducing the Act of 1753 to the House of Commons (Hansard, XV. col. 3), said —after repeating in substance the dictum of Chief

Justice Holt—that marriage without banns or license had long been *prohibited* by statute: but he never said that the prohibited marriages were invalid, when completed; and all the world knew the contrary. In 1836, in the debate on the Marriage Bill, Dr. Lushington (Hansard, 3rd S. xxxiv., col. 492) affirmed, without the slightest attempt at contradiction from any quarter, that 'up to the year 1756 (misprint for March 24th, 1754) marriage was a civil contract. Two people declaring themselves man and wife before witnesses were as indubitably married as persons making the same declaration in Scotland, with the exception of not being able to claim some obsolete remedies as to real property.' The penalties of irregular marriage were ecclesiastical; but invalidation was impossible. The Earl of Oxford's deception, already noticed, was a marriage: the dressing up of a trumpeter in a clergyman's dress was merely to satisfy the lady that usual forms were observed.* The general feeling demanded a religious ceremony; and it was the universal—but wrong—belief that a clerk in orders was necessary.

The Fleet parsons who plied for marriages in gown and bands were probably for the most part in real orders. Goldsmith, who wrote the 'Vicar of Wakefield' a few years after the change, sticks to the wrong notion of the old law in the fictitious marriage. The deceiver of the deceiver palms a real license and a real clergyman upon him when he wanted shams; and so far the

* This is what the continuer of Granger means when he says the Earl 'may be said to have committed polygamy.'

marriage holds good under the new law. But the marriage is not made in a church, and so it was null and void, which it would not have been under the old law,* and which the novelist does not make it.

But seven or eight years later, when he wrote the 'Goodnatured Man,' Goldsmith had learnt the new law, and he sends his couple to Scotland, or would have sent them if the money had not failed. And here I may digress to say that the ridicule of Scotch poverty, which is sometimes thought to have begun with Johnson, runs through the century, and seems to date from the Union.

Swift, in the work which provoked the discussion in the Lords, says that some of the nation had gained an amount of money in England, of which no Scotchman could form an idea unless he had travelled. And Goldsmith, when his young lady asks if they could not go without the money, makes her servant reply: 'To Scotland without money! Lord! how some people understand geography!'

In 1749 and 1750, a work was published by Dr. Gally, a king's chaplain, on clandestine marriages. Clandestine, meaning *secret* in Latin, was the technical term applied to all marriages not made *in facie ecclesiæ*,

* The very possibility of a sham clergyman was, under the new law, an absurdity; for the officiating minister must have been then, as now, the well-known incumbent or curate of a public church, or a clergyman who had satisfied the incumbent of the reality of his character. It certainly has happened in a few cases, that a person not in orders has deceived an incumbent, and procured permission to officiate, but such a depth of plot must not be taken, without mention, to be in the novelist's intention.

no matter how publicly. It appeared that banns were seldom published; that the ordinary run of respectable marriages were contracted under license, given without inquiry on tender of the fee; that a very large number were solemnized without any witness except the officiating minister. The tradition of the Fleet parsons is still prevalent. Women used to be married to men whom they were never to see again, in order to be protected by certificate from arrest for debt, and one man would lend his name to any number of women for this purpose. It does not appear that the state of things was one bit better in 1706; and thus we see that a marriage, good in all respects before the law, and reputable in society, might be contracted with any degree of privacy, and attended by any subsequent notoriety which the parties chose to give, and this without any record being in existence. The marriage-shops at the Fleet and Mayfair kept no registers; and it appeared in the debates of 1753, that at one of these places, called *Keith's Chapel*, six thousand marriages were performed in a year; while at the fashionable church of St. Anne's, Soho, there were not more than fifty in the same period. It was not pretended that these irregularities were of recent growth, whether as to quantity relative to population or as to quality. I dwell upon these points because of the impression which many have that no marriages were ever valid except those performed by a person in orders and *in facie ecclesiæ*. In the third volume of the 'Lexicon Technicum' (1744), a learned work, a few years before the new law, it is laid down as notorious that marriage

without a priest is not null and void, but only irregular. I have seen it stated that there are no cases in which these irregular marriages were affirmed by the courts. But if the merely living together by the name of husband and wife, under a common surname, were sufficient proof of marriage, the cases in which the fact of marriage was impugned after the death of parties must have been very few. If we look to the drama, up to some years after the Act of George II., we find everywhere a mixture of law with custom. The valid ceremony neither requires a consecrated building, an interval of notice, nor an inquiry into the age of the parties, but always a performer in orders. Taking up a collection of plays, I opened on 'All the World's a Stage.' There is a difficulty in this play; Parson Dozey would not dare to affront the Squire; but the Rev. Joe Tackem, a friend of the bridegroom, chances to arrive at the end of Scene 3, and the two, the girl a minor, who have 'just stepped out,' step in again as one at the beginning of Scene 4. It is quite clear that the world at large knew the law in every point but one: the universal habit of employing a clergyman had produced the impression that this also was a part of the law. This opinion continues down to the present time. An article in *Household Words* (No. 436), which I chanced to meet with on the day of writing this, says: 'That all marriages were valid, without reference to age, place, or circumstances, which were solemnized by an ordained minister of the English or Roman Church.'

The most curious proof which I have found of the

vulgar error that a person in orders was necessary is in Wycherley's 'Country Wife.' Here a marriage, celebrated by a pretended priest, is repudiated as soon as the pretence is discovered—which happens in an hour or two—and the lady is then married by a real priest to the pretended priest himself, who had put on the disguise for the purpose of foiling his rival. This was not the law; Chief Justice Holt against all the dramatists: but it was the vulgar notion; Wycherley against all the judges. There is another ground in the play, that the minister did not 'say all the Common Prayer;' this would have been no objection at all. In our day we know that the minister may *curtail* the service provided no essential be omitted; that is, without invalidating the marriage: and the essentials, distinctly recapitulated when the parties are pronounced man and wife, are the consent, its publication, the pledges, and the ring as a proof. The idea of the mutilated service making a mutilated marriage reminds one of the sailor who came to the altar without cash enough to pay the fee: 'Never mind, old fellow! marry us as far as it will go!'

I have noticed the reason of the importance attached to *precontract;* by shifting of words, this importance is lost. Since marriage was but contract, precontract was premarriage, if it had been *de præsenti;* and the distinction between this and *de futuro* was one of much difficulty in many cases, demanding inquiry in all. Under our present law the *registrar* could not refuse to perform his office though five hundred women were to produce solemn written promises against the man, and five

hundred men against the woman, all signed *de præsenti* by both parties. Probably the *priest* could not refuse, though perhaps there is yet enough of unrepealed letter to make it a question for the courts. But in old times, even after the Reformation, precontract was sufficient ground to refuse a license; it opened the inquiry whether marriage had not taken place, and that inquiry could only be provoked by publication of banns. In the canons, both of 1584 and 1603, precontract, consanguinity, and affinity; in that order are mentioned together as examples of reason against granting license to dispense with the *trinundine denunciation*, commonly called banns—of course *alleged* precontract, etc., are intended. The canons of 1603 require parties divorced *a mensa et thoro* to give security that they would not proceed *ad alias nuptias*. This new marriage would be no marriage at all; the meaning seems to be that the parties are to be under a penalty, capable of legal enforcement, not to contract that common-law marriage —no matter how void—which ecclesiastical law could not prevent.

There is no old statute legalizing the marriages of Quakers and Jews; their method was legal in itself. In the long account of the grievances of the Nonconformist which Edward Calamy (the younger) gives, I cannot find a word about marriage; and for good reason: he knew it was not necessary to have anything to do with the Establishment in that matter. Had he been bound to employ a clergyman and the Church form, we should have had remonstrance and defence. Under the Com-

monwealth, in 1653, it was expressly enacted that all marriages should be solemnized before a justice of peace, and that no other mode should constitute marriage according to the law of England. This was the first time that *nullity of marriage* was manufactured by law; but it was the act of the Convention. When a more formal parliament, in 1656, confirmed the enactment, it omitted the clause that no other marriage should be held good. Marriage was a civil contract; the Convention enacted that it should be nothing but a civil contract. It may be that Selden was the adviser, or an adviser, of the measure. He died in 1654, and in the *Table-talk*, the collection of the sayings of the last years of his life, we find 'Marriage is nothing but a civil contract; 'tis true, 'tis an ordinance of God; so is every other contract. God commands me to keep it when I have made it.' This is rather strange, for it would justify any number of contracts, or indefinite polygamy, and would apply to women as well as to men.

There was one thing which long puzzled me. If the idea of nullity of marriage, by reason of departure from conventions imposed by law, were so new, as it must have been in 1753, why do we not meet with some proofs of the novelty having had a startling effect upon the public mind? I suppose this may have arisen from the thoroughly established habit of employing a clergyman, and the consequent infrequency of the purely civil contract. Evidences of wonder or of satire may perhaps be found by those who look for them. I never found more than one, but my stray reading has little to do

with 1750-60. There is a vignette caricature, dated 1757, and headed 'The Devil of a Medley.' It consists of portraits, books, etc., heaped together, each representing some sign of the time. One of these is a book outside of which is written *nul mariage*, but whether by carelessness, or from want of room, or from an intention to represent the change as brought from France—a common imputation on all that was new—I cannot tell. Here, however, I must say my remarks refer to the paucity of things addressed to the public at large, as tales, dramas, caricatures, etc. Those who fought about the new Act produced shoals of pamphlets, in which the annulling clause is a bone of contention. There were those who denied that nullification was in the power of the State, even in the case of minors being of marriageable age; and the right was defended on the other side. But even the nullifiers had not got to the idea of *nullity;* to *annul* was then, as now, according to dictionaries, not to affirm nullity *ab initio*, but to *annihilate*, to make something into nothing. They maintained—I use their own phrases—that the State had a right to *prohibit* clandestine marriages *on pain of nullity*. Herein they show that they could not divest themselves of the idea that marriage *is* marriage, until the law steps in with its nullification; just, as a murderer is a murderer until the law deprives him of that and all other titles with a halter. What the law has pronounced *void*, their prepossessions confounded with *voidable*—a state of things to which the law respecting the prohibited degree had accustomed all. This is a difficulty of the

human mind, which finds it very hard to declare something to be nothing, or nothing to be something, by a convention, whether of thought or of law. The mathematicians had faced and overcome the difficulty a century and a half before, when, after a struggle, 0 took its place in the series 0, 1, 2, 3, etc. It is possible that the word *nullify* was originally a clerical satire on a mathematician. It is not found in dictionaries of the seventeenth century; nor can I, nor does any reader of *Notes and Queries*, produce any anterior use of it. Now, Aubrey, speaking of Harriot the algebraist, who, towards the beginning of his century, was said to have repudiated the Old Testament, relates that the clergy imputed his death to a special judgment, for *nullifying* the word of God. Harriot, as well known, was the first who dared to say $A=B$ in the form $A-B=0$, one of the greatest sources of progress ever opened in algebra. This slight change was a very startling one; and it may be supposed, until other instances of the words shall be produced, that the opponents meant to signify that Harriot treated the Old Testament as he had treated $A-B$, and invented a word for it.

The great point of the Act of George II., which in time remedied all old disorders, was the refusal of legal recognition, except in the case of Quakers, etc., to all marriages, except those which—failing the *special* license of the Archbishop—were solemnized in a public church or chapel, after banns published or common licence obtained. It was held that the ceremony must be performed by a person in orders; but the Act is not

express on this point. Probably the legislature cared nothing about this matter: I suppose the judges held that a necessary consequence of the enactment must be taken for intentional. Now, the obligation to solemnize marriage in a church or chapel, which could not be open for any solemnity except by the consent of the incumbent, made the clerical performer as good as a necessary consequence of the law.

In such a state of society as we now see to have existed in 1700, we may with reason imagine that the unacknowledged marriages, especially between people of very different rank, were much more common than in our day. The scanty evidence of private life which has come down to us has not been well sifted with reference to the point; but there is enough to induce the suspicion that the Halifax and Peterborough cases were far from standing alone—they were probably cases of a small and known class, not numerous enough to be recorded in history as a feature of the time, but common enough to prevent its members from being objects of much curiosity.

The state of society being as above described, the difficulty of the secrecy and of its continuation is complicated by the difficulty of assigning all the sufficiently probable reasons, and of weighing their relative force. I should be loath to put forward any supposition as having great force in my own mind, except one, as follows:

Whatever the reason may have been, it is unlikely that it was regarded as final. Few private marriages

are made upon the supposition that they must always remain private. Halifax, we may presume, did not calculate upon a fatal fever at the age of fifty-four, and his reason may have had much more force as for temporary concealment than as for permanent suppression.

Arguing merely on the difficulty as a matter of curiosity—for I again disclaim all feeling of necessity to meet it as an argument against my conclusion—I propound, first, the possibility of a failure of evidence, say, by death of witnesses. The usage of the times would be to think lightly of the necessity of preserving evidence. When the parties had notoriously lived in public acknowledgment, and under one name, no proof would in general be wanted; for, as in the present Scotch law, public and continuous acknowledgment would itself furnish all the evidence required. Our highest court has recently (July, 1867) supplied a decisive case as to the law of Scotland. An adulterous couple lived as man and wife; the real husband died, and the pair lived on as before, without any ceremony or declaration. The House of Lords decided for the legality of the marriage, and the right of succession of the heirs—that is, the continuance of cohabitation, from and after the time when marriage was possible, is marriage according to the Scotch or ancient law. It seems from this case that, even if the woman had never heard of her real husband's death, and had continued to believe herself only a mistress, she would have been a wife without knowing it. If the contemplated secrecy had been only temporary, perpetuation of evidence might have been neglected, the

reason for secrecy might have continued longer than was expected, and until the wholly unexpected death of Halifax came like a thief in the night. While in most vigorous health, to all appearance, he was taken suddenly ill on the 15th of May, of inflammation of the lungs, and died on the 19th. To assume that sufficient evidence *must* then have existed is sufficiently answered by the assumption that there *must* have been what was held a good reason for not using it.

We cannot now tell whether Halifax had taken the precaution, very common then as now, of barring the dower of his lands; they were various, acquired at different times, by a man of very busy political occupations. Had there been any portion, however small, subject to dower, no way of announcing the marriage would have been worth a straw, unless it had been established in the Courts, and claim of dower made. Any other method would have been nothing better than a proclamation of the connexion, and a confession that the alleged marriage had no evidence which would bear the inspection of judge and jury or of Doctors' Commons. It could not have been contended that the legacies were in bar of dower: and even in that case, the widow had her election to make. And dower, however small it might have been, would have put the marriage before the world with the utmost force. Nor would law, on this account, have been slow to help.

To use a remarkable phrase of Chief Justice Coke, 'It is commonly said that three things be favoured in law—life, liberty, and dower.' And among the cases, things

far plainer than rules, is the following. A man was attainted, and his land was given by the Crown to a second, who sold it to a third. Upon the attainder being subsequently reversed, the widow recovered her dower from the purchaser. When we are looking for *possible* reasons for the continued secrecy, we must be content with *possible* answers to objections: a thing seldom seen by opponents, who very often demand demonstration. Here is a case that might easily have arisen: failure of evidence during the life of Halifax which would have made the establishment of the marriage impracticable, as against the heir-at-law on the question of dower. We must remember that each surmise of reason may be unlikely: if we can state six possible and imcompatible reasons as to which, in our total ignorance, we are similarly situated, it is at least five to one against each of them. The reader must remember that I am speaking of the law of dower, as it was in the reign of Anne, not as it is now.

If it were thought reasonably possible that the proof of the marriage would have broken down, the wisdom of letting well alone would have been manifest. We have evidence that Mrs. C. Barton's position was highly respectable, as to the society she could command, and the esteem in which she was held. And there was no very long period during which there was any occasion to agitate this question. Halifax died in May, 1715, and the lady, in August, 1717, contracted a marriage which would not have been derogative in his acknowledged widow, and which was a splendid match for one

in her original position. There were but two years and three months between these two events. If but three months after the husband's death be allowed for repose, and if, during six months before the second marriage, the shadow of the coming event be permitted to have placed the question in abeyance, there is but eighteen months of difficulty. For the second marriage was as complete a testimony to the respectability of the bride as the times could give, as well from Conduitt's personal character as from his position. If, as I suppose, the first marriage had been a matter of private understanding in a respectable circle, there could have been no occasion to court publicity after the second marriage, so far as Mrs. Conduitt's comfort was concerned. And it is not likely that, in that day, and in the mind of a lady who had submitted for ten years to be reckoned a mistress out of her own circle, content with the knowledge and that of her friends that she was a wife, there would have existed so intense a desire for the public clearance of her conduct, after the evidence of her second marriage, as would be supposed by a woman of our own time to whom the idea of submitting without deserving it to a woman's worst reproach had never been familar.

The circumstances of Halifax's will are very curious, and publicity may bring forward something to develop their bearing on the probabilities of the case. There is the will (April 10th, 1706), duly attested by three witnesses, one of whom is the celebrated publisher, Jacob Tonson. It need give no surprise to find him here: he was much in the great world; and he was

secretary of the Kit Cat Club, of which, as we have seen, Halifax was another member. Pope, in the satirical account of his journey on horseback into the country, with Tonson's rival, Bernard Lintot, makes Lintot say, 'If I had a son big enough to go on with the business, by G— I would keep as good company as *old Jacob*.' There are three schedules, say, A, B, C. Of these A is the first codicil (April 12, 1706), attested by *two* witnesses, neither of whom attested the will, and devising personal property to Miss Barton. C is the second codicil (Feb. 1, 1712), devising, *inter alia*, a life interest in real property to Miss Barton, and accompanied by a memorandum (Aug. 30, 1713) acknowledging interlineations. B is a memorandum (of the same, Aug. 30), of the nature of a codicil, revoking A on condition that there shall be no dispute on C, and enjoining the executor to raise no opposition. All is in the handwriting of Halifax; but B and C, though signed, have no attestation whatever. Appended to the will, however, is an affidavit sworn by two persons before a surrogate and a notary public (June 18, 1715, a month after the testator's death), to the effect that A, B, C, are entirely in the handwriting of Halifax, and signed by him. On all this we may ask how, after the Statute of Frauds, this affidavit could have been of any legal effect? How could any proof of handwriting give validity to the unattested codicil? Did the executor (George Montague, the nephew, who succeeded to the barony, and was afterwards created earl), who was also heir by the will, as well as heir at law, give

effect to the codicil from regard for his uncle, who not only left him land and money to the reputed value of £130,000, as well as the reversion of the property subject to Miss Barton's life interests, but had resigned in his favour, shortly before his own death, the very lucrative post of Auditor of the Exchequer, of which he had previously got his nephew the reversion? This is very likely: nothing, I believe, is known of the second Lord Halifax which should make it otherwise. Or did Miss Barton and her friends compel him to give effect to the codicil by threatening to prove the marriage and claim dower, if the dower would have exceeded the legacy in value? This is not impossible: there are men of good repute to whom it would not be safe to trust for the relinquishment of £20,000, or value, even after a gift of £130,000 and a rich place. And was it knowledge of the power left in the widow's hands which made Halifax careless about signing B and C in presence of witnesses? Was the second codicil understood between him and his wife to be in bar of dower, he trusting her and Newton on the one hand, and his nephew on the other? Was the memorandum of 1713 inserted on discovery of the accidental omission of the attestations, on the knowledge that the codicil could not fail to be sufficient for the previous reasons? And why was the first codicil deferred two days after the will, and attested by new witnesses? Was it that it was preferred to attest this bequest, which arose out of the marriage, by the hands of witnesses to the marriage (F. Lambert and Nath. Cowdery; one Habbakuk

Cowdry is ridiculed in the history of the Calves' Head Club), so as not to give knowledge or ground of surmise to any new persons? All these are questions only of curiosity to those who are satisfied by the evidence of the marriage; to others there is what presumption they may offer on one side or the other. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that the unattested codicil was disputed.

But Conduitt himself gives no information in the memoranda which he left, beyond stating that his wife lived, before and after her marriage with him, twenty years with her uncle, when thirty years had to be explained. This was far the greatest difficulty, to my mind, before the discovery of Newton's letter. We can hardly speculate on it. If these memoranda were made long after his own marriage, he may have known that the story had died out, and may not have wished to give means of revival. But his omission does not destroy the evidence I have given. And more, if his silence about the marriage be a difficulty on one side, his silence about the notorious scandal, that is, his want of denial, is as great a difficulty on the other.

As yet I have had no opponent except Sir David Brewster and his reviewers. At the time I write this (1865-66) Sir D. Brewster is in his eighty-fifth year, near the end of a long course of celebrity and utility. All his other claims are lighted up by the noble enthusiasm with which, for more than thirty years, he followed up the subject of Newton's biography, and in 1856 produced the most complete result yet attained,

his former production of 1831 being then more complete than any of its predecessors. Before I publish this paper, which has already existed in one form or another for more than eight years, it is but too probable that this distinguished career will have come to an end: if not, it must have passed the utmost point at which literary controversy can be expected. Under the circumstances it would be difficult—in many cases—for me to steer a course satisfactory to myself in regard to arguments which I cannot always treat with respect, and quite impossible to find one which will be approved by all; the plain truth being that it is imperative on me to give the proper description of very amusing can't-sees and very evasive won't-sees. I observe that forbearance shown to the proposer of an argument out of personal respect, when it takes the form of mild treatment of the argument itself, turns all that is omitted into strength for the argument, and, more often than not, all that is presented into disrespect to the proposer. In a difficulty of this kind I know of no better resource than to appeal to the opponent himself, and to ask him how he would treat those for whom in life he had both respect and regard, when he finds it necessary to hold any of their qualities very low? And the best answer is his own mode of proceeding. I examine his treatment of Francis Baily. It must be remembered that the terms he applies to his departed friend are the effect of documents which that friend had never seen, and could not have seen, as he knew; himself admitting that Baily's case was unanswerable by any documents within Baily's

reach, though he thinks he can make a good answer from his own discoveries among the Portsmouth papers.

When Flamsteed learnt that Newton and Halley had broken the seal of his observations without his consent, he was, says Baily, 'of course very much annoyed and irritated;' here is an inference as to Flamsteed's feeling in March, very well borne out by his recorded feeling in the following October. Sir D. Brewster, on the ground that Flamsteed made no complaint, none being recorded in what to his mind were certain likely occasions in the interval, instead of allowing Mr. Baily his opinion, and counterpoising it by his own view of the force of the intermediate silence, writes (ii. 230) as follows:—'The whole statement of Mr. Baily, that he was annoyed and irritated at the piece of unexpected intelligence, is an entire fiction.' This is the way in which Sir D. Brewster often states, as positive assertions of fact, the inferential conclusions which it pleases him to set against the inferential conclusions of opponents. The charge of *fiction*, taken alone, might be interpreted as meaning that Baily was under a *delusion;* but this does not consist with what is said in other places. We find that (Preface, p. xii.) Newton is to be defended against a 'system of calumny and misrepresentation unexampled in the history of science.' *System* seems to point to more than one person; though it may refer to the continued action of one person, as Flamsteed. Not so here. In the preceding page we are told that 'it was reserved for two English astronomers, the one

(Flamsteed) a contemporary, and the other (Baily) a follower, to misrepresent and calumniate their illustrious countryman.' To all who knew Francis Baily it is unnecessary to say a word: to others, the complete way in which his supplement dealt with objections is quite enough to show the full right he had to advance all he brought forward, and to maintain all he advanced. The late Dr. Whewell, whose stout defence of his own opinions was conducted in a rough and overbearing style which every mortuary account has recorded, and very properly—it would be absurd to describe St. Paul's without mentioning the clock—was Baily's most vigorous and most able opponent. But he was, under the rind, a candid and truth-loving man; and was silenced by reason, in the mouths of those who stood up to him, more times in a twelvemonth that many soft-spoken men in their whole lives. He saw the force of Baily's reply, admitted it in private, and left the field. But this is not the point. It will be seen that Sir D. Brewster charges Baily with fiction, calumny, and misrepresentation. These were terms which he did not use during Baily's life, and which I am as sure as Macaulay ever was of anything that he would not have dared to use if Baily had been able to answer. But I do not regret that the terms should have been used.

Those who examine Sir David Brewster's account of the Flamsteed controversy will find parallels to the defective reasoning and want of precision which I shall point out in reference to the case of which I treat. I

shall take one instance of that looseness of representation, and want of reference to the past, which he is apt to fall into. He says (Preface, p. xi.), 'In 1835 the scientific world was startled by the publication of Baily's Life of Flamsteed, a huge volume, deeply affecting the character of Newton, and, strange to say, printed, and circulated through the world at the expense of the Board of Admiralty. It should be remembered that there were quarters from which much reproach was cast upon the Admiralty for publishing disparagement of Newton. The best possible official answer was given in the preface; but it should have been in the title-page. To the words 'printed by order of the Lord's Commissioners of the Admiralty' should have been added, 'on the recommendation of the Board of Visitors of the Royal Observatory.' And Sir D. Brewster should not have written this information. A board of which the great majority are men of science, each holding one or another kind of public scientific post under Government, in a University, or over a scientific society, with the President of the Royal Society for a chairman, is a board on the advice of which the Admiralty would have had a good answer if they had called Newton a quadruped. The Flamsteed and Newton quarrel was not the main object of the work, which was a corrected reprint of Flamsteed's *British Catalogue* of stars; the quarrel was an essential part of the history of the catalogue, and the publication of its history was one of Flamsteed's posthumous rights. But many of the remarks which were made imputed to the Admiralty

that they had gone out of their way to make known a quarrel between Newton and Flamsteed, the greatest discordance between theory and practice that had ever been noticed, for no other reason than because that quarrel was *in se* matter of interesting scandal to the scientific world.

Of the 'huge volume' a little more than half is taken up by the catalogue itself; more than three-quarters of the remainder consist of the actual correspondence, which no one would wish to be suppressed. So that the obnoxious part is less than one-eighth of the whole. Sir D. Brewster might have said that Newton had been calumniated in a huge work of thirty volumes; for the article on Flamsteed in the *Penny Cyclopædia* contains an abstract of Baily's case.

Next, as to the scientific world being 'startled' by the publication of the volume—an instance of fact coloured by feeling. The life of Flamsteed was published in (I think) August, 1835: I know that a proof of the title-page was received back from the Admiralty on July 23; and grass did not grow under Baily's heels. As long before this as November 8, 1833, Baily read a paper to the Astronomical Society, which was forthwith printed in their *Monthly Notice*, and which gave the heads of the quarrel in six small octavo pages of small print, going down into details as far as the *malicious thief*, which Flamsteed called Halley. It ends with, 'The correspondence, however, divulges the lamentable fact that, even amongst men of the most powerful minds, there is no protection against the infirmities of human nature.'

In the Annual Report of the Society (February, 1836) the recent publication is alluded to as follows:—'The various communications which the Society had received on this subject must have prepared the astronomical world to expect a new and curious page in the history of their science. Nor have these reasonable anticipations been disappointed. . . .' Sir D. Brewster was a fellow of the Astronomical Society from its commencement, and received all its Monthly Notices. He must have been entirely conquered by the feeling of the moment when he forgot the twenty-one successive months during which he, already a biographer of Newton, had talked the matter over, and heard it talked over, in every scientific company. And he must have been culpably willing to take the current feeling of his mind as evidence of the past, when he did not remember to consult astronomical records to confirm or correct what he was going to asseverate about former opinion; and this after one of the most stinging warnings which a biographer had ever received against what I must call *slapdashery* of assertion. It was he himself who, in his first 'Life of Newton' (p. 243), quoted the celebrated letter of Newton to Flamsteed, containing, 'I do not love . . . to be thought . . . to be trifling away my time (about mathematical things) when I should be about the King's business,' as a letter of *Flamsteed* to *Newton*, 'Characteristic of Flamsteed's manner.' It was he himself who described the annotation, 'Was Mr. Newton a trifler when he read mathematics for a salary at Cambridge?' as Flamsteed's remark upon *his own* letter.

But perhaps Sir D. Brewster himself was startled, and may have coloured the world with his own impression: if so, he showed as great a forgetfulness of himself as of others. February 5, 1834, he writes to Baily:

'If you have not already resolved upon it, I would venture to urge you to prefix a life of Flamstead to your edition of the *British Catalogue*, and this would afford you an excellent opportunity of giving an account of the difference between him and Newton.'*

Sir D. Brewster, then, was one of those who, after the appearance of the abstract of exposure in 1833—and when he must have read that abstract not seven weeks before he wrote—urged Baily to prefix a life of Flamsteed to his edition of the *British Catalogue*, which it had been arranged was to appear. The reason given by Sir D. Brewster was that such a life would afford an excellent opportunity of giving an account of the difference between him and Newton, about which, at that very time, there was a strong impression that it 'deeply affected' the character of Newton. He instigated Baily to describe this quarrel, the heads of which he knew—perhaps all the details, for they were fully discussed at Baily's house, where I have met Sir D. Brewster—in a publication, which he knew was to be paid for by the Admiralty. All this is well enough as appertaining to the controversy on Baily's publication; but my affair with it is the representation of the critic, who has come forward to break a lance with me on the Halifax question.

* For this letter Bailey paid a postage of 1s. 3½d., little thinking how well it would be worth the money before all was done.

All who read Sir David Brewster's life of Newton will see that he is *counsel* for Newton, not judge of his case. In one sense he does not sustain the character: he does not pick his documents. He has fairly, and unequivocally, abandoned some points on which he defended Newton in his life of 1831, on information found among the Portsmouth papers. He has, in the plainest way, brought forward the papers on religion, which have been hitherto suppressed, and which prove that Newton was some kind of Unitarian, as was already believed by the great majority of those who had looked into the matter. This admission (Sir D. Brewster himself being of Scottish orthodoxy, and having formerly defended Newton's English orthodoxy) must have been a vexation of spirit: the manner in which it was made must render it impracticable to suspect the maker of wilful suppression on any material point.

When two controversialists exchange private correspondence on a question on which one afterwards becomes the public assailant of the other, it is doubtful how far the character of privacy protects the writer, if his confidential admissions be at variance with his subsequent public assertions. And the difficulty is one of degree—the greatest of all difficulties. If—to take a case very different from the real one—Sir D. Brewster had privately written to me that he was satisfied Sir I. Newton had connived at the dishonour of his niece, but that Newton must be defended; and if thereupon he had publicly accused me of false statement and false reasoning for maintaining—supposing one to have done

so—a conclusion which he himself privately held; I should have felt no doubt of my right to set his private declaration against his public one. And, for myself, I go so far as to say, that even if it were held that in such a case the usual law of correspondence should extend, I would have set that law at defiance. In matters of less extremity than the case supposed, the way to proceed involves various considerations: in that which has actually occurred I intend to produce Sir D. Brewster against himself; and to what concerns myself, I add that I believe my publication will do much good to Sir D. Brewster's book. It will do good in this way: it will show the reader that the biographer *meant* to be counsel for Newton. Now the arguments of a professed advocate, as such, are heard or read without repugnance: they do not gravitate *in proprio loco.* But when the judge on the bench plays the part of counsel, we feel impatient; and more, we are apt to try to trim the boat by a reaction of our own. It is my full belief that Sir D. Brewster's book has been read under misconception from its first appearance. He ought to have said plainly, 'I will neither wilfully alter a fact nor suppress a document; but all beyond this is your own look-out. Newton is to be defended, and I am to do it.'

It will be plain to those who read his account of the Halifax case, that the author, in the usual way, brings my arguments into his own court, and proceeds to *judge* them. There is a certain feint of examining both sides; and sentence is passed. Now I say that the writer intended to be *counsel* for Newton; and knew

that he intended it. That he had no other character is clear to those who read his whole book; I say again, so far as argument is concerned, no right of suppression being assumed. But he knew that he was under a self-imposed necessity of defending Newton; not of defending him right or wrong, Heaven forbid! but of finding out that he did nothing but what was right.

Sir D. Brewster's work was published before June, 1855. It contains a refutation of the Halifax connection of the most confident character and triumphant result. There cannot, he says, be a doubt about the matter: as to myself, I violate every principle of reasoning, and assume as facts what are most positively pronounced to be pure and obvious misreadings of my authorities. Now for extracts from Sir D. Brewster's letters to me.

'February 21, 1854.

'I have to thank you, I presume, for the remarkable paper in *Notes and Queries* about Mrs. Barton. I am puzzled beyond measure what to say on that subject.'

'March 14, 1854.

'In the matter of Catherine Barton, whatever view we take of it, Newton, I think, must be held blameless. I cannot adopt the marriage theory, because, whatever reason there might be during Lord Halifax's life to keep it a secret, it was certainly the duty of Newton, and of Conduitt, to have protected the memory of their relative from the suspicions which the concealment of the marriage has produced.'

That is, no theory must be adopted except one under which Newton is blameless; and there were suspicions, though in print Sir D. Brewster declares that I am the first person who has brought any forward.

'December 28, 1854.

'I fear I shall make a poor story about Mrs. Conduitt. You have exhausted the subject. I find it distinctly stated by Conduitt that his wife *lived with Sir Isaac twenty years.* How, then, could she have been housekeeper to Lord Halifax? I think his Lordship's biographer does not speak the truth.'

At this date, then, Sir David had not arrived at his ingenious conclusion that the biographer said nothing.

'February 11, 1855.

'I am trying to put together a few pages on Halifax, and the wife you have given him. It is the most disagreeable portion of Newton's history. Newton's character is not protected, even if a private marriage could be proved. I have come to the conclusion, on grounds which I fear will not satisfy you, that Miss Barton *never lived in* Halifax's house.'

'March 13, 1855.

'I have got a distinct opinion from various classes, lawyers, clergymen, and persons of rank, that Newton's character as a moral and religious man would have been irretrievably ruined, even in the London society of that day, if his niece had been living in Lord Halifax's house.'

Even as a privately married wife understood. I would not give much for the reading of his informants. But then I have not seen the way in which the case was brought before them.

'*Every means of defence, therefore, against such an hypothesis becomes obligatory on me as his biographer.*'

That is, in the plainest words, Sir D. Brewster *intends* to be Newton's counsel, be the truth what it may.

It is right the reader should be reminded that all this was written, and the book published, before the discovery of Newton's letter. Had Sir D. Brewster known of that letter, he must have treated it as a forgery; for

Newton's character would have suffered if he had even allowed a private marriage. But whether I was the forger, or Mr. Libri, or Christie and Manson, or Thomas Rodd, or some previous owner of the bit of paper, would have been a nice question.

Sir D. Brewster had a mind in which the prevailing impression acted very strongly upon the facts before him, of which the *Athenæum* exposed a very striking instance not long before his death. The current state of feeling was always in extremes. He wrote to me:

'February 21, 1854.

'In writing the first volume of his life, I have been led to think Newton more *human* than I had formerly believed; and I must confess that I entertain very nearly, if not wholly, the views which you have published.'

The first clause was the truth, well borne out by the work; the second was the exaggeration of the moment, as will be clear enough to those who know what both have written. Sir D. Brewster's 'Life of Newton' may be read with much more profit by those who are aware of this strong power of colouring.

One of the artifices of counsel which is very openly practised by the biographer has been also adopted by the reviewers. I am represented as maintaining, before the discovery of the letter, that the marriage was proved. So much the better for my opponent; it shows that his advocate's office can be exercised without any permanent and constantly present sense of it, by reason of his being able to put belief into his own mind before he attempts the mind of his reader. He cannot realize a state of

suspended decision. There are minds in which there is nothing but certainty for or against; minds in which the bubble is always at one end or other of the level; minds in which there is no medium between the historic truth of the 'Iliad' and the non-existence of Troy. The biographer possesses one of these minds. If not, what are we to say to the representation of myself as maintaining a positive conclusion when I had written as follows:—'As yet I can but say that the hypothesis of a private marriage is to me the most probable of those between which a choice must be made.' 'And the supposition of a private marriage, generally understood among the friends of the parties, seems to me to make all the circumstances take an air of likelihood which no other hypothesis will give them; and this is all my conclusion.' And I here repeat that, until I saw Newton's letter, which announces the existence of circumstances of family relation, I could but treat all I had done, to use my own words again, as the 'provisional results of unfinished inquiries.'

The biographer never endeavours to meet the whole of the circumstantial evidence, and to break the united force of its parts. It is enough for him that the point which he assails at the moment is not conclusive, taken alone. This, again, is an artifice of counsel:

'Gentlemen of the jury, let me call your attention to the slightness of the proof against my client. Smith was seen going upstairs with a pistol: does that prove that he shot Jones? A loud report was heard, and Smith was seen descending the stairs without a pistol: how

can anyone contend that these circumstances, jointly or severally, prove anything against my client? He had not a pistol! A nice proof that he shot a man! Jones was certainly found mortally wounded, and a pistol was on the floor: but what does that prove? Simply that a murder or a suicide—mark me, gentlemen, a suicide! —was committed; nothing whatever as to who did it. Must my unhappy client be made answerable for the murder upon such circumstances as these? For it is really not worth mention that Robinson heard Smith say he hated Jones. Does a man necessarily shoot every one he hates?' So says the learned gentleman, not a very adroit one in this case: but I do not say that the biographer has shown any of the art of the practised barrister; for he does not keep the function out of sight, and he cannot hide the *pro re natâ* character of his manufacture of inferential conclusions into assertions of fact. The joint testimony of independent circumstances—commonly called *circumstantial* evidence, and under that name often treated as *indirect* evidence, which may be quite another thing—is handled by Sir D. Brewster after the manner above described; and by many others. But when some time has elapsed, the opponent is often found quite a convert to the conclusion, fixed in his mind he never knew how or when, he entirely forgetting that he refused all assent when he first heard the case. When the bias of opposition subsides, the circumstances quietly work their way. The *possibilities* which that truth-smothering bias erects into *likelihoods* cannot keep their quantity in the mind except

with an opponent right opposite. Mr. Müller ran off to America with the murdered man's hat and watch, leaving his own hat in the railway carriage. This was nothing, according to some of the newspapers. We think little [quantity cut down under bias] about the hat; and as to the watch, the writer adds, the owner *might* have dropped it, and the finder *might* [possibilities converted under bias into presentable probabilities] have sold it to Müller. The murderer was hanged, and cleverness crept back into its shell until next time, when it will come out prepared to maintain that the case then to be in hand is totally different from Müller's, because it is the murdered man's shoes and snuff-box which detect the criminal, and not the hat and watch.

It is affirmed that Swift's information makes it 'quite clear' that the niece was living with her uncle in Leicester Fields. Oct. 9, 1711:—'I lodge or shall lodge, by Leicester Fields.' Oct. 25:—'I sat this evening with Mrs. Barton, who is my near neighbour.' Nov. 28:—'I am turned out of my lodging by my landlady, but I have taken another lodging hard by in Leicester Fields.' If there had been no question and no evidence about Miss Barton living away from her uncle, these extracts would have tallied with what we should *have* already considered next to certain, namely, that she lived with her uncle. Even in this case it would have been hard to explain the absence of all mention of Newton—an absence which raises an adverse presumption to all who can see difficulties on both sides. The whole amounts to this, that Swift lodged near Leicester

Fields, and Mrs. Barton near him. I am not enough of the partisan of my own view to say that Halifax lived near Leicester Fields; that his wife might be near her uncle, aged sixty-nine, when Swift was in London; or that this proximity had been made a condition of the marriage. But such a thing is far from impossible; and the absence of all mention of Newton brings it not far from probability.* This point cannot be got

* I have searched the rate-books for 1711 of the Parish of St. Martin's, which includes St. Martin's Street, on the south side of Leicester Fields, where Sir Isaac Newton lived. Sir Isaac's name occurs year after year, but I have not been able to find the name of Lord Halifax. I have also unsuccessfully searched through the rate-books of the parish of St. Anne's, Soho, which includes the north side of Leicester Fields (now known as Leicester Square). It would seem that if Lord Halifax lived in the immediate neighbourhood of Sir Isaac, he must have occupied a furnished house or lodgings, and was not rated in his own name. The Life of Lord Halifax, published shortly after his death, gives no indication of the place of his town house. The rate-books of St. Anne's, Soho, contain the name of Sir John Newton (Sir Isaac's kinsman) from 1707 to 1718. Sir John Newton's house was on the west side of King's Square (now known as Soho Square), seven doors southward from Charles Street. Soho Square was then a very fashionable square. There was a Rector's Rate in the parish of St. Anne's, Soho, which, from the claims for over-rating of small houses, appears to have been a rate of a halfpenny in the pound. Sir John Newton's house was rated to the Rector at ten shillings, which would correspond to a rateable value of £240—a high rent in those days; and rateable values were then, more than now, below rental values. Probably the Rector's Rate on the larger houses was not closely scrutinized. Of the other houses in King's Square, Lord Mansell paid twelve shillings, the Earl of Bradford thirteen and fourpence, and the Earl of Carlisle, who occupied the largest house in the square, one pound ten shillings; Lady Shovell eight and fourpence, Lady Vane seven and fourpence, and the Earl of Dartmouth six and fourpence.

over: to the reader of the journal there is no way out of it.

It is firmly maintained that the annuity of £200 a year was the gift of Newton. But the omission of this gift from Conduitt's list of benefactions to the family must be accounted for; and for this purpose the biographer makes historical evidence of what he chooses to find in Conduitt's mind. The omission, he says, was made because the annuity was not a benefaction, but a virtual debt. It was, in the opinion of her husband, a debt due from Newton to the niece, who 'had for twenty years kept his house.' The annuity—as Sir D. Brewster himself had found by the Portsmouth papers—was bought in 1706, when Miss Barton was 26 years old; take 20 from 26, and there remains 6. That is to say, little Kate Barton, at six years old, was installed mistress of Newton's apartments in Trinity College, and *responsibilitied* with the key of the sugar. This oversight is the consequence of catching at an

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The great house of the Earl of Leicester (afterwards occupied by George II. when Prince of Wales, and subsequently by his son Frederick Prince of Wales), on the north side of Leicester Fields, was charged three pounds thirteen for the Rector's Rate. Sir Isaac Newton, in the parish of St. Martin's, paid two pounds ten shillings per half-year for the Poor Rate, but I have not been able to discover any clue to the rateable value of his house. It then fronted on Leicester Fields; the block of buildings which now stands between the house and Leicester Square having been built since. Mr. J. J. Cartwright, of the Record Office, has given me a reference to a MS. of the time of Queen Anne in the British Museum (Addit. MSS. 22,267—164), which gives the address of Lord Halifax as 'Old Pallace Yard.' But this may have been only his official residence.

A. C. R., 1885.

argument, without any thought about its consistency, and with a rigid determination that it *shall do*. Let us suppose that Newton had, ten years after, given his niece this annuity, over and above the equal share of the personal residue, which she took as one of the next of kin. The matter would then have stood thus; and thus it must have stood in the confusion which caused the mistake. Newton gives his destitute niece an excellent education, and then receives her into his house, where she lives for twenty years, giving the usual attention to domestic affairs. He introduces her to a friend, who is so captivated by her conversation—in the modern sense of the word—as to leave her a fortune; he also marries her to a wealthy member of Parliament, and leaves her—for he was an intentional intestate—a share in his personal property with seven other nephews and nieces, for whom he had done comparatively nothing. Besides this, he buys for her during his life an annuity of £200 a year on her own life. This annuity he describes to his own mind as a debt due to his niece for her care of his house. What would her husband have been if, instead of putting down this annuity—this payment for looking after her own board and lodging, the materials of which were a free gift, though it cannot be denied that her uncle had bed and board in his own house—as the most handsome of all the benefactions, he had silently acquiesced in the description and left the annuity out of the list? He would not have been Conduitt, of whom the little we know marks him as a gentleman fully alive to his wife's obligations

to her uncle. This invention of the *debt* is as good, in its way, as the hypothesis about the key of the sugar.

If Newton did make his niece any special acknowledgment for her services in keeping his house, it was an estate of £4,000 value, which he gave to Miss Conduitt not long before his death. Unless, which does not appear, there were an understanding that this was to count for Mrs. Conduitt's share in the residue, it is likely enough that the reason of the gift was as above. The biographer of Halifax, in the passage I have quoted, states that Halifax cast his eye upon Mrs. C. Barton, to be the superintendent of his domestic affairs; *but that, as she was young, beautiful, and gay, those who were given to censure passed a judgment on her which she no ways merited*, since she was a woman of strict honour and virtue. The biographer of Newton begins by quoting the passage, and does not deny that it must have been known to Newton and his friends. When he comes to discuss it, he says:

'The passage which has given rise to the discussion contains three distinct propositions: 1. That Halifax had resolved never to marry. 2. That he cast his eye upon Miss Barton to be the superintendent of his domestic affairs. 3. That she was a woman of strict honour and virtue.'

All that is in italics above is omitted in the summary, and in the discussion it is expressly said that 'calumny had never breathed that she was' the 'mistress of Halifax,' but that 'the very biographer, whose words are in every other respect admitted as true, declares she was a woman of strict honour and virtue.' This omission, which I take of course to be unintentional, is another specimen of the want of power to see context when a point can be made by part of a passage.

The biographer of Newton then proceeds as follows:

(Vol. ii., p. 271)—'When the contents of this will became known after the death of Halifax, Miss Barton did not escape the censure of the world [the biographer distinctly says it was before this; Halifax had been dead only a few weeks when he wrote], though she was regarded by all who knew her as a woman of strict honour and virtue. [True, *by all who knew her;* but how could this be, unless she were married to Halifax?] . . . During his lordship's life, and when a frequent visitor at the house of Newton, his affection for Miss Barton, and his delight in her society, never once excited the criticism of his contemporaries. [No one says so, it is the superintendence of Halifax's domestic affairs which excited the remarks.] . . . (P. 272) Although it is stated that Miss Barton did not escape from censure, yet calumny, with her many tongues, does not seem to have left upon record the slightest charge against her character. [Then Mrs. Manley and Halifax's biographer, and Voltaire, did not speak from or with tongues of calumny.] . . (P. 277) In denying the marriage, we do not admit one of the grounds on which it has been maintained. We deny that Miss Barton ever lived one single night under the roof of Lord Halifax. His biographer makes no such statement. [Sir D. Brewster gives the summary, which omits the statement that she superintended the domestic affairs, and was "censured" for it.] The first of these propositions [that Halifax resolved never to marry again] overturns the theory of a marriage [of course a resolution never to marry again proves that no marriage followed: young ladies, we know, do sometimes break their resolutions never to marry; never gentleman, young or old].

'The second merely proves a *plan or a wish* on the part of Halifax that Miss Barton should superintend his household [true, when the words implying her accession to the plan are suppressed], a wish, too, which was never expressed amid the gossip of contemporary correspondence [this I do not understand], or in the hearing of any witness. [How, then, came it known and recorded?] . . . (P. 280) Now the very fact that such respectable parties (as Newton and Conduitt), so deeply interested in the character of their accomplished relative, contradicted neither the fact, if it was a fact, nor the rumour, if it was a rumour, is a proof that there was neither fact nor rumour to contradict. [So, then, if there had been a *fact*, Newton would

have contradicted it; that is, told a falsehood! Sir D. Brewster does not mean this; unless, indeed, he thought Newton would have acted as *counsel* for his niece.] How could any person contradict the *cast of an eye*—the only act ascribed to Halifax by his biographer? [True; but what was ascribed to Miss Barton?] How could they contradict the statement, made only in 1853 [for which read 1715, but this was suppressed], that Miss Barton lived in Montague's house, when no person in their own lifetime ever made such a statement [except Halifax's biographer, whom Sir D. Brewster knew of, and Mrs. Manley, whom he did not know of, and as many more as shall be disinterred, known to neither of us]? How could they express their indignation at the charge that she was the mistress of Halifax, when calumny had never(!) breathed that she was, and when the very biographer, whose words are in every other respect admitted as true, declares that she was a woman of strict honour and virtue? [The part suppressed contains a calumny, which Newton or Conduitt might have answered.]'

I shall not insult the understanding of my reader by proving to him that Halifax's biographer says, and means to say, that Miss Barton lived in the house of Lord Halifax as housekeeper. Sir D. Brewster, under cover of his own omission, reduces the whole to the *cast of an eye;* and this it is impossible to treat with gravity.

The biographer of Halifax, with a simplicity which I think exceeds that of ignorance, professes to believe that, though, as hinted by him, Miss Barton lived in Halifax's house as superintendent, yet 'the noble peer's complaisance to her proceeded wholly from the great esteem he had for her wit and most exquisite understanding, as will appear by what relates to her in his will at the close of these memoirs.' The words of the will were so much at variance with this description, that they must mean more, as applied to a lady who had

lived in the house with the testator. The easiest supposition is that the biographer knew of the marriage.

The biographer of Newton treats Pittis's expression of his opinion that Miss Barton was an honest woman as a declaration of fact. He thinks it very unfair that one whose words are in every other respect admitted as true,' should not be credited in that one respect also. There are five things which he does not see. First, that the other things *are* statements of fact, which anyone might know with certainty. Secondly, that they are not admitted when sufficiently contradicted; for instance, I do not admit that Miss Barton was a widow. Thirdly, that the statement as to Miss Barton's character, as put by the biographer, is a matter of opinion, and has not the force of evidence of fact. Fourthly, that Sir D. Brewster does not put it rightly; for what the biographer says is that she was regarded as an honest woman by *all who knew her;* words which have a meaning with reference to others. Fifthly, that what he does say is better explained by a private marriage than by any other supposition; for he says that she lived in the house of Halifax, that a judgment was passed on her by those who were given to censure—a tolerably fair description of the mass of society—but that those who knew her knew better. No private marriage emerges from the biographer's words; but when this solution appears from elsewhere, it is strengthened by those words. And there is a *sixth* point, which makes it strange that he should reproach me with rejecting the biographer's character, and admitting everything else

that he said. I did *not* reject the testimony, for *I believe in the marriage.* Sir D. Brewster did not see that the question between him and me was, he for one way of clearing Catherine Barton, I for another. Halifax's biographer says she was an honest woman; I say so too, and so does Sir D. Brewster. I say it because I fully believe it proved that she was Halifax's wife; Sir D. Brewster, because he fully believes she was nothing but the friend of her uncle's old friend in her uncle's house. Sir D. Brewster, once more confounding facts and inferences, declares that I reject the testimony because I reject the conclusion he draws from it—

It will be observed that my critic insists on the impropriety of rejecting—he thinks I do this—one part of the testimony of my own witness, when I receive the rest. The remark is the echo of the rule of the courts, that neither party is to discredit its own witness. I never could see the sense of this rule, except upon the implied notion that a suit is a *game*, with certain rules of advantage and disadvantage for the players. The rule has been to a certain small extent relaxed, I believe, in what is known as the "Common Law Procedure Act;" and further relaxation is no doubt on the way. The truth ought to be got at in every possible mode; the law is ready enough at its assumptions, and queer ones they sometimes are; why not assume that both plaintiff and defendant desire nothing but the truth? As you please, however, for the law: in literary discussion no such rule can be tolerated for a moment. Anybody may lower any evidence in any proper way; but he must take all

fair consequences; he must allow the general loss of credit its proper action upon other points. But he must not, as is frequently done in law, letters, and everything else, lower credit upon an inference, and then take the loss of credit as supporting the inference itself. For example, the celebrated bibliographer, Brunet, was inclined to admit that the famous treatise *De Imitatione Christi* really was written by Thomas à Kempis (ob. 1471, æt. 91). There is a very old and well-supported opinion in favour of Gerson, who died forty-two years before him. The brethren of his convent published an edition of all the works of Thomas (not à) Kempis—they say *all*—in the year following his death; it does not contain the great treatise, though it has its short chapter *De Imitatione vitæ Christi*—quite another thing—in the proper place. In spite of these conclusive circumstances, Brunet calls the edition of inferior value, because it does not contain the great treatise, in a manner which shows he means to fortify his opinion of Kempis's authorship by the smallness of the value of the collected edition.

My object in writing is to call attention to the whole question on the part of those who look up the obsolete writings of 1706—1750, and of those who possess private letters of that period, and my digressions may be suggestive. It is not to be hoped that very many allusions will be found. In all times persons of different pursuits are, as a rule, little in connexion with each other. This is the case in our own day; and much more in the time of Newton. Even now, though

the numbers of those specially devoted to one pursuit, but knowing enough of others to take interest in discussion, is much larger than it was, and also the links which connect different branches of learning in the persons of men given to several, but addicted to none; there is anything but fusion of the learned classes. In the index of Sir David Brewster's Life of Newton, a work in which much of that gossip is found, which is so useful in biography, we shall find but very few of the names known in contemporary literature. Addison, the friend of Halifax, is there, and Pope; but the pages referred to confirm my remark. The connexion of Addison, a great contemporary and another public servant, with the Life of Newton, in two large octavo volumes, is just this, that he made an oration in favour of the Cartesian philosophy at Oxford in 1693, and that he is the authority for the statement of Halley being an infidel. If Addison and Newton spoke together at the house of Halifax, as probably they did, no Boswell was present. As to Pope, we have his conceit about Newton which he called an epitaph; and there is a couplet, in some verses of Pope found after his death:

> 'Nature and nature's laws lay hid in night;
> God said, "Let Newton be," and all was light.'

There is also (Brewster, ii., 521) a sensible letter from Pope on the posthumous edition of the work on chronology, in which he speaks like a person who had never seen Newton: 'I doubt not his life and manners would make as great discovery of virtue, and goodness,

and rectitude of heart, as his works have done of penetration and the utmost stretch of human knowledge.'

There are in the 'Dunciad' significant indications how completely Pope was unable to bring forward individuals when he spoke of science; on everything else he satirized things through men—and women: as in Book IV., line 471, etc., where we should expect a cut at some few of his day, but we are put off with Hobbes, Spinoza, and Descartes; also at verse 643, etc., where on the main point no one is mentioned. We may guess, then, that there is not much to be expected from the stores of literature, public or private; nevertheless, the little which does exist may be much to the point: those especially who are in possession of private letters from Newton or his friends should carefully examine them, after perusal of the facts brought together in this article. One letter has clearly remained unread by any writer prepared to see the force of an allusion, though 130 years from the death of Newton; this may not be the only one which would throw light upon the subject.

Up to 1835, when Baily published his Life of Flamsteed, there was no curiosity about this matter. The statement in Sir D. Brewster's first Life of Newton, namely, that Halifax was attached to Miss Barton, and that the causes which prevented their union were unknown, formed, I think, the orthodox view of the matter; nothing further was publicly expressed, though there was private speculation about the legacies, the wording of Halifax's will, the insinuations of Voltaire, etc. Mrs. Manley's stories were utterly unknown, I

suppose, in the world of science. I am strongly of opinion that good tradition, which died out in its duty, checked the slander. I find that the works of the second quarter of the last century, which are virulent against Newton, do not perpetuate any scandal about his niece. Of these I have preserved two from utter oblivion (*Notes and Queries*, Series 2, Vol. IV., p. 301). First, the case of Robert Brown (1732), in which a strong attack is made on the Flamsteed committee; and, secondly, the 'Life of Joe Thompson' (1750), in which Newton is, as the asserted plagiarist of Flamsteed, *princeps Roguorum.*

The *Biographia Britannica* (1750) revived the matter, by quotation from Halifax's biographer; and as late as 1835 there was a current amount of concealed doubt and suspicion. In 1851 I examined, at the request of his surviving sister, all Baily's scientific correspondence. A great number of letters addressed to him related to the life of Flamsteed. Now it had appeared in the Life that the turning-point of the quarrel between Flamsteed and the committee was the death of Halifax, Newton's great support. Very shortly after this event took place, it was hinted to Flamsteed that he might get what he wanted for the asking. Of Mr. Baily's correspondents the great majority say nothing about the source of Newton's influence with Halifax; all, I believe, who were known to the world as engaged in the prosecution of science. And this was to be expected; for these were persons who were accustomed to meet Mr. Baily, and had opportunities of oral communica-

tions. But there were those who may be called *outsiders*, and among their letters there is enough additional—to what I had picked up elsewhere—to enable me to state that there did exist among thinking men a small proportion who, some in sorrow and some in scorn, imputed to Newton that he derived patronage from the seducer, and out of the dishonour of his niece. The existence of such an opinion was in part the means of drawing my attention to the subject; but I was much influenced by another fact Professor Rigaud ascertained from Baily—that instead of Mrs. C. Barton being the widow of a Colonel Barton, she was his sister, and ascertained it with ease. Here was a correction, which no one had thought it worth while to investigate, of the statement of Halifax's biographer: a statement which it seems clear was true, so far that the lady passed for a widow—or under the style of a widow—when she superintended Halifax's domestic affairs. It was thus made evident to me, that for a long time no attention had been paid to this question. It had become almost a rule that anyone who should engage in serious research on some one point of past science would find that the general historians had got both too much and too little. The period 1825—1840 had been marked in England by the writings of four men, who set the example of delving into one thing at a time, and presenting both the results and a full account of the sources from which they had been obtained. These were Stephen Peter Rigaud of Oxford, George Peacock of Cambridge, Francis Baily of the Stock Exchange, and

Joshua Milne of the Sun Life Office—two academical and two commercial. The most marked difference between their courses of life, as to intellectual labour, lies in the academicians, having recourse to their public libraries, and leaving no amount of books worth naming; while the men of business were obliged to collect libraries of their own, and did collect libraries of which the sale catalogues are, in their special subjects, the most remarkable of their day. Contemporary with the above in the time of his researches, was another friend of mine, J. E. Drinkwater-Bethune, whose Lives of Galileo and Kepler, though not exhibited to the reader in all their research, were founded upon that special investigation, so far as it could be made in England, of which the example was so much wanted in popular works. Various other efforts which could not be effectively named without some detail of explanation will help to establish that in the second quarter of the nineteenth century the examination of special points of scientific history became epidemic among us. I speak of Britain; but, if it were to my purpose, I could prove that the same thing was in progress on the Continent. By particular attention to one point, is secured the power of catching at any incidental information which a casualty may be fit to afford. Newton's letter had passed from owner to owner, and from auction to auction, perhaps for fifty years, possibly for a century. It must have been shown as a curiosity to many, for such is the destiny of manuscripts which are preserved as autographs. But it can hardly have come under the eye of any who were prepared to see the meaning of the words

expressive of family relation between Newton and Halifax. A person glancing over the letter, if he had never made any particular inquiry, might think that, if not some kind of surplusage, the words of relation referred to well-known intimacy between Newton and his friends' next of kin; or, at any rate, that nothing could be founded upon them. But to anyone who knew how the existing facts seemed to draw together upon the supposition of a marriage, and how completely negative is all our knowledge of even ordinary acquaintance between Newton and Halifax's nephews and nieces, the words of the letter would flash light upon his mind at a glance.

It will be very satisfactory, to all who cannot infer with as positive a mind as the biographer, to feel that the possibility of Newton having been obliged to connive at an irregular connexion is put out of the question. This all will admit: for all will say that Newton's words prove, that if there were any connection it was a marriage. But do I really mean that Newton was under suspicion of such baseness? We want a word. A long time ago, after a serious illness in my family, I asked the medical man whether my child had been in danger. 'Not in danger,' was the answer, 'but in *danger of danger*.' Newton was in suspicion of suspicion—in suspicion of the second order, with a large number of those who had examined the evidence, and a multitude of those who had derived knowledge of it. That peremptory fellow whom we all know, *Don't-tell-Me* by name, jumped at once to the conclusion that the

probability of Newton's connivance was precisely that of the something to connive at.

It was in Britain the temper of the age, before Baily's Life of Flamsteed rudely broke in upon the illusion, to take for granted that Newton was human perfection. There is a class in this country which has a percential existence among all that is middle, from nobility down to handicraft; into both of which it throws its shoots. It is a respectable class: it can truly be described as so respectable, you can't think! It is a useful class; it is part of the ballast of our good ship; and though our middle ranks furnish a much larger percentage of that which is ballast and cargo, both, yet no ballast is useless. Who does not know the smug individual of this species, as he sees him picking his way through the world? His highest model is aristocracy; his social life is silver-forkery; his main pursuit is money-grubbery; and his whole religion is Sunday-prayery. This is the complete specimen, fit for the Museum; but the characteristics are variously interfused through an immense mass, often lost in other and better features, except to a close observer. This class is, in every case in which its members knew the name of Newton, the one in which you were safe to be reckoned as in the broad way if you imputed anything wrong to the man who bore that name at the Mint—a position which was mysteriously connected with wonderful discoveries in the heavens.

> 'And, so you think that Newton told a lie;
> Where do you hope to go to when you die?'

help of this class, without which the man of science could not have put Newton on the pedestal which had been made for him, it was practicable to allow what had the clearest appearance of a direct and deliberate falsehood on Newton's part to stand unexamined for more than a century. Newton, in his final conflict with Leibnitz, declared that the decision at the Royal Society against Leibnitz had been voted by a 'numerous committee of gentlemen of different nations.' The world was never told of more than six, all British subjects of English mother-tongue; no list of the committee was published with the decision. Here was, to all appearance, if not a falsehood, worse—the evasion of calling the English, Scotch, etc., different nations in reference to a dispute between Britain and the Continent. If the faith in Newton had been anything but a formula, some would have reasoned thus:—'Newton could not be false: he says the committee had members of different nations; let us look at the minute-books of the Royal Society, and find them out.' But this was not thought necessary. I had long been puzzled with this statement of Newton's: though I knew him to be capable of being betrayed by the necessities of his case into that culpable evasion in which self-love finds excuse, I did not believe that his principles would allow him directly and wilfully to falsify a fact; or that his acuteness would allow him to do it on so small a matter and to so little purpose. It chanced to me, in 1845, to look at a Life of De Moivre of the rarest character, by his friend Dr. Matthew Maty, Sec. R.S. I never saw

more than one separate copy; but I long after found it in the *Journal Britannique* for 1755—a French journal, published in England by the 'little black dog,' as Sam Johnson called him—Maty himself. Here I found *eleven* members named, two of them aliens—De Moivre himself and Bonet the Prussian minister. And though they were the only two foreigners, yet De Moivre was a host: the only one among the rest who was fit to stand up against him for one moment on a mathematical question was Halley. On application to the Royal Society, the facts were verified immediately: the six who have passed for the whole were those first appointed; the remaining five were added piecemeal in the five weeks following the first nomination.

I drew up a few words on this discovery, and sent them to the Royal Society. I thought they would be a *charta volans* for the *Proceedings*, etc. To my very great surprise, they were printed in all the dignity of the *Philosophical Transactions*, in which no historical paper has ever appeared, that I know of—certainly none within the century. But the matter concerned the character of Newton. The little bit, of two and three-quarter pages, with the facts about the committee, and some anecdotes—as how, for instance, Newton said that nothing but his age prevented him from having *another pull at the moon*—looks curious among the elaborate mathematical and physical papers. This is so far a mere anecdote: it takes meaning in connection with what follows.

About a year after the preceding paper was sent, some

By help accidents, by which those who are prepared can seize snap surmises as well as facts, led me to a surmise that perhaps the reprints (1722) of the *Commercium Epistolicum* (1712)—as the work containing the reasons and decisions of the above-named committee is called—had not been quite fairly made. I say *reprint*, not *second edition;* for the very title-page was reprinted *with the old date*, after the avowedly new matter and a new title over all, which amounted to the most positive declaration that not a comma was intentionally changed. I had no copy of the first edition, so I applied to the Council of the Royal Society for the loan of their copy, stating why I wanted it. The request was instantly granted; and I found, on examination, that some alterations had been made, of which some were decidedly unfair in matter, all being of course unjustifiable under the old date and without notice. The worst among them was, that whereas the old committee did not say precisely, in the evidence, *when* the letter on which the most depended was forwarded to Leibnitz, a date for this transmission was foisted into the reprint. It ought to be said that the notions of the literary word, in that day, about the sanctity of documents were by no means so rigid as they are now; so that what, done by one of us, would be sheer rascality, may be let off with a much softer name. I drew up an account of the alterations, and sent it to the Royal Society: to have sent it elsewhere would have been to say, in effect, that though I knew the Society would go out of the way to clear the fame of Newton, I could not trust them to clear their own

wrong to Leibnitz. That they had some hand in it was clear, from the reprint having cuts from the old wood-blocks which were the property of the Society. The Society proved itself worthy of the reflection which I could not venture to cast; it declined to print the second paper. I gathered that the Council thought it would be necessary to submit my paper and the documents to a special committee of examination. The documents were two printed books, and the question was, whether certain passages in one book were accurate reprints of certain passages in the other; and, if not, how they differed. I have no doubt the real reason was, that in the paper was seen danger of danger to Newton's character. I afterwards saw a published reason, of which I was not cognizant at the time, for thinking that Newton himself was the editor of this reprint, and the writer of the preface which preceded the old title. Sir D. Brewster, from the Portsmouth Papers, found that I was quite right. When I made this last discovery, it crossed my mind for one moment that the fact was known in the Council of the Royal Society, and that the refusal to investigate the question was in part the consequence of disinclination to bring it out. But this notion took no root; I soon felt satisfied that, whatever unconscious bias might do, there was no reason to fear a definite intention to suppress a definite fact. And further, so small and so inexact is the knowledge of the history of science among scientific men, that I could easily imagine not one single person on the Council knew so much as that there had been a reprint, much

less that Newton's active share in the reprint had been matter of discussion, of affirmation, and denial.

I applied for permission to withdraw the paper, hoping thus to nullify the proceeding, in form at least. But the laws of the Society prevent the withdrawal of any communication which has undergone adjudication; hence this little matter must have its little place in the history of the Society, and its somewhat larger place in mine. A copy would have been allowed me if I had requested it; but I preferred to write another paper, and to request its insertion in the *Philosophical Magazine* (June, 1848).

One testimony to the significance of the *variantes* is that of Sir D. Brewster, who holds it wise to omit all mention of them. After my paper, which I took care he should have, and with full knowledge of the new work being *reprinted under the old date*, he calls it 'a new edition, with notes, a general review of it, and a preface of some length.' He did not even give the true date (1722), but sticks by that of the second title-page (1725). This is of some consequence; for three years, at Newton's age, then made a difference in the palliation which years and infirmity may be made to give. But it must be remembered that persons unused to bibliography are often not even aware of the distinction between a *reprint* and a *new edition*. I freely and unreservedly blame the Council of the Royal Society—collectively, of course—for not printing the account of the variations mentioned above; they missed a golden opportunity. They might have shown that the beautiful edition of the *Commercium*

Epistolicum, published in 1856, by Biot and Lefort, at the expense of the French Government, 'avec l'indication des variantes de l'édition de 1722,' would have recorded that these *variantes* were first made known by the Royal Society itself, the body which was most concerned in the publication of them, considered as an act of reparation. The opportunity is lost, and the revelations of the Portsmouth Papers and of those of Leibnitz have left little chance of another. The Royal Society, in this matter, reminds me much of those old managers of the impeachment, who, when Warren Hastings, many and many a year after his acquittal, appeared before a House of Commons, the members of which rose and uncovered at his retirement, remained sitting with their hats on, to show their sullen consistency. As a question of curiosity, I asked myself whether *Leibnitz* ever found as stubborn an adherent in spite of all that could be learnt? I could not remember such a thing in real life; but the optimist of Voltaire's fiction hits the case exactly: 'Eh bien! mon cher Pangloss,' lui dit Candide, 'quand vous avez été pendu, disséqué, roué de coups, et que vous avez ramé aux galères, avez-vous toujours pensé que tout allait le mieux du monde?' 'Je suis toujours de mon premier sentiment,' répondit Pangloss; 'car enfin je suis philosophe; il ne me convient pas de me dédire. Leibnitz ne pouvant pas avoir tort . . .'

I have given the preceding detail to show the reader who can approach the question of Lord Halifax and his wife, but is not able to enter upon scientific discussion,

that I have long been deep in these matters, and have been successful in elucidating points of history. It will be clear that I have not been a partizan of Newton, but that I have assailed his conduct, when I saw occasion, with perfect freedom; and this I could make much clearer if I went further into what I have written on the dispute with Leibnitz. I am sure that if I had found what I held sufficient proof that Newton had been a Sir Pandarus of Troy, I should not have shrunk from unreserved exposure. I detest the fictitious association, as a matter of course, of moral with intellectual greatness; and I laugh at it into the bargain, as I should at the attempt to prove that all great minds have long noses. There is but one thing of the kind which is more mischievous, and that is the tendency to throw dirt at the morals, or to import damnation into the destiny of those who differ from the thrower or the importer in religious belief. As to what I have to say about Newton himself, I reprint some paragraphs from a review of Sir D. Brewster's Life, which I wrote for the *North British Review*, of August, 1855. I preface them by a few words from the *Times*, which had a long article on the same work about six weeks after mine was published; they illustrate the reaction against hero-worship, which is sure to take place. Newton, it was said, had not the heart of a man; he wanted human feeling; he was a coward, etc. (*Times*, September 21, 1855.)

'Nothing is more difficult than to settle who is the most illustrious, the most to be admired, in any walk of

human greatness. Those who would brain us—if they could but imagine us to have any brains—for hinting that it may be a question whether Shakspeare be the first of poets, would perhaps have been *Homerites* a century ago. In these disputes there is more than matter of opinion, or of taste, or of period; there is also matter of quantity—question of how much, without any possibility of bringing the thing to trial by scale. This element of difficulty is well illustrated by an exception. Among imquirers into what our ignorance calls the *laws of nature*, an undisputed pre-eminence is given to Isaac Newton, as well by the popular voice as by the deliberate suffrage of his peers. The right to this supremacy is almost demonstrable. It would be difficult to award the palm to the swiftest, except by set trial, with one starting-place and one goal; nor could we easily determine the strongest among the strong, if the weights they lifted were of miscellaneous material and bulk. But if we saw one of the swiftest among the runners keep ahead of nearly all his comrades, with one of the heaviest of the weights upon his shoulders, we should certainly place him above all his rivals, whether in activity alone, or in strength alone. Though Achilles were the swifter, and Hercules the stronger, a good second to both would be placed above either. This is a statement of Newton's case. We cannot say whether or not he be the first of mathematicians, though we should listen with a feeling of possibility of conviction to those who maintain the affirmative. We cannot pronounce him superior to all men in the sagacity

which guides the observer of—we mean rather deducer from—natural phenomena, though we should be curious to see what name any six competent jurors would unanimously return before his. But we know that in the union of the two powers the world has never seen a man comparable to him, unless it be one in whose case remoteness of circumstances creates great difficulty of comparison.'

'Far be it from us to say that if Newton had been Cœnopolis, a Sicilian Greek, he would have surpassed Archimedes; or that if Archimedes had been Professor Firstrede, of Trinity College, Cambridge, he would have been below Newton. The Syracusan is, among the ancients, the counterpart of the Englishman among the moderns. Archimedes is perhaps the first among the geometers, and he stands alone in ancient physics. He gave a *new geometry*—the name afterwards applied to the Infinitesimal Calculus—out of which he or a successor would soon have evolved an infinitesimal calculus, if algebra had been known in the West. He founded the sciences of statics and hydrostatics, and we cannot learn that any hint of application of geometry to physics had previously been given. No Cavalieri, no Fermat, no Wallis, went before him in geometry: there was not even a chance of a contemporary Leibnitz. We cannot decide between Archimedes and Newton; the two form a class by themselves, into which no third can be admitted; and the characteristic of that class is the union, in most unusual quantity, of two kinds of power, not only distinct, but so distinct that either has often

been supposed to be injurious to the favourable development of the other.'

The scientific fame of Newton, the power which he established over his contemporaries, and his own general high character, gave birth to the desirable myth that his goodness was paralleled only by his intellect. That unvarying dignity of mind is the necessary concomitant of great power of thought, is a pleasant creed, but hardly attainable except by those whose love for their faith is insured by their capacity for believing what they like. The hero is *all* hero, even to those who would be loth to pay the compliment of perfect imitation. Pericles, no doubt, thought very little of Hector dragged in the dust behind the chariot; and Atticus we can easily suppose to have found some three-quarter excuse for Romulus, when he buried his sword in his brother's body by way of enforcing a retort. The dubious actions of Newton, certainly less striking than those of the heroes of antiquity, have found the various gradations of suppressors, extenuators, defenders, and admirers. But we live, not merely in sceptical days, which doubt of Troy, and will none of Romulus, but in discriminating days, which insist on the distinction between intellect and morals. Our generation, with no lack of idols of its own, has rudely invaded the temples in which science worships its founders, and we have before us a biographer who feels that he must abandon the demigod, and admit the impugners of the man to argument without one cry of blasphemy. To do him justice, he is more under the influence of his time than

under its fear; but very great is the difference between the writer of the present volume and that of the shorter life in the *Family Library* in 1831, though, if there be any truth in metaphysics, they are the same person.

We here come upon the well-known letter to Mr. Aston, a young man about to travel, which, as Sir David says, 'throws a strong light on the character and opinions of its author.' It does indeed, and we greatly regret that the mode in which that character has been represented as the perfection of highmindedness compels us to examine this early exhibition of it, in connection with one of a later date. Newton is advising his young friend how to act, if he should be insulted. Does he recommend him, as a Christian man, to entertain no thought of revenge, and to fear his own conscience more than the contempt of others? Or, as a rational man, does he dissuade him from the folly of submitting the decision of his difference to the logic of a sword or pistol? Or, supposing him satisfied by well-known sophisms that the duel is noble and necessary, does he advise his friend to remember that dishonour is dishonour everywhere? He writes as follows:—

'If you be affronted, it is better in a forraine country to pass it by in silence, and with a jest, though with some dishonour, than to endeavour revenge; for in the first case your credit's ne'er the worse when you return into England, or come into other company that have not heard of the quarrell. But, in the second case, you may beare the marks of the quarrell while you live, if you outlive it at all.'

This letter has often been printed, in proof of Newton's sagacity and wisdom. If Pepys or Boswell had written the preceding advice, they would not have been let off

very easily. Again, when, many years after, Newton wrote, as member for the University in the Parliament which dethroned King James, to Dr. Covel, the Vice-Chancellor, he requests a reasonable decorum in proclaiming William and Mary, 'because,' says he, 'I hold it to be their interest to set the best face upon things, after the example of the London divines.' And, again, 'Those at Cambridge ought not to judge and censure their superiors, but to obey and honour them, according to the law and the doctrine of passive obedience.' What had Newton and passive obedience just been doing with King James? These instances, apart from science, show us the character of Newton out of science; he had not within himself the source from whence to inculcate high and true motives of action upon others; the fear of man was before his eyes. But his mind has been represented as little short of god-like; and we are forced upon proof of the contrary. Had it been otherwise, had his defects been duly admitted, it would have been pleasant to turn to his uncompromising philosophic writings, and to the manner in which, when occupied with the distinction between scientific truth and falsehood, no meaner distinction ever arose in his mind. This would have been, but for his worshippers, our chief concern with him. The time will come when his social weaknesses are only quoted in proof of the completeness with which a high feeling may rule the principal occupation of life, which has a much slighter power over the subordinate ones. Strange as it may seem, there have been lawyers who have been honest in

their practice, and otherwise out of it; there have been physicians who have shown humanity and kindness, such as no fee could ever buy, at the bedside of the patient, and nowhere else.'

We are of opinion that the moral *intellect* of Newton—not his moral *intention*, but his power of judging—underwent a gradual deterioration from the time when he settled in London. We see the faint traces of it in his manner of repudiation of the *infinitesimal* view of fluxions, in 1704. A man of sound judgment as to what is right does not abandon a view which he has held in common with a great rival, and this just at a time when the world is beginning to ask which came first in their common discovery, without a clear admission of the abandonment. He does not imply that *some* have held that view, and declare against the opinion of those *some*, without a distinct statement that he himself had been one of them; still less does he quietly and secretly alter what he has previously published, or allowed to be published, so as to turn the old view into the new one, and to have the reader to understand that he had never changed his opinion. The Newton of the mythologists would have felt to his fingers' ends that such a proceeding had a tendency to give false impressions as to the case, and to throw suspicion on his own motives. This is a small matter, but it is a commencement of worse. We come to the *Commercium Epistolicum*, the name given to the collection of letters, accompanied by notes and a decision of the question, on the part of a committee of the Royal Society. To this well-known part

of the history Sir D. Brewster has a very important addition to make; and he makes it fairly, though we confess we wish he had given us what they call chapter and verse. 'It is due to historical truth to state that Newton supplied all the materials for the *Commercium Epistolicum*, and that though Keill was its editor, and the committee of the Royal Society the authors of the Report, Newton was virtually responsible for its contents.' 'We cannot easily credit the story of Newton in love at sixty years of age. In Conduitt's handwriting is a letter entitled, 'Copy of a letter to Lady Norris, by ——,' docketed, *in another hand*, 'A letter from Sir I. N. to ——.' The letter is amusing. After informing the lady that her grief for her late husband is a proof that she has no objection to live with *a* husband, he advises her, among other things, that a widow's dress is not acceptable in company, and that it will always remind her of her loss: and that the proper remedy for all these mischiefs is a new husband; the question being whether 'she should go constantly in the melancholy dress of a widow, or flourish once more among the ladies.' Sir D. Brewster seems rather staggered by this letter; but there is no authority for it coming from Newton, and surely we may rather suspect that his friend, Lady Norris, sent him, or perhaps Miss Barton, a copy of a letter from some coxcomb* of a

* The original letter, written shortly after 1702, is copied in the handwriting of Conduitt, who did not become a member of Newton's family till 1717. Say that Lady Norris sent it to Mrs. Conduitt (as an old letter which turned up) to amuse her, and that Conduitt copied it.

suitor. Newton was always a man of feeling, right or wrong, and, though perhaps he would have been awkward at the expression of it, he never would have addressed a woman for whom he experienced a revival of what he once felt for Miss Storey, in such terms as the young bucks in the *Spectator* address rich widows. The letter reminds us much more of Addison's play, and of the puppy who was drummed away from the widow by the ghost, than of Newton.'

To us it has always been matter of regret that Newton accepted office under the Crown. Sir D. Brewster thinks otherwise. 'At the age of fifty, the high-priest of science found himself the inmate of a college, and, but for the generous patronage of a friend, he would have died within its walls.' And where should a high-priest of science have lived and died? At the Mint? Very few sacrifices were made to science after Newton came to London. One year of his Cambridge life was worth more to his philosophical reputation and utility than all his long official career. If, after having piloted the country safely through the very difficult and, as some thought, impossible, operation on the coinage, he had returned to the University with a handsome pension, and his mind free to make up again to the 'litigious lady,' he would, to use his own words, have taken 'another pull at the moon;' and we suspect Clairaut would have had to begin at the point from which Laplace afterwards began. Newton was removed, the high-priest of science was translated to the temple of Mammon, at the time when the Differential Calculus

was, in the hands of Leibnitz and the Bernoullis, beginning to rise into higher storeys. Had Newton remained at his post, coining nothing but ideas, the mathematical sciences might have gained a century of advance.

We now approach the end of our task, and, in spite of our battle with the biographer, we cannot express the pleasure with which we have read his work. It is very much superior, new information apart, to the smaller Life which he published long ago. Homer's heroes are very dry automatons, so long as they are only godlike men; but when they get into a quarrel with one another, out come all the points on which we like and dislike. Newton always right, and all who would say otherwise, ex-cathedrally reproved, is a case for ostracism; we are tired of hearing Aristides always called the Just. But Newton, of whom wrong may be admitted, Newton, who must be defended like other men, and who cannot always be defended, is a man in whom to feel interest, even when we are obliged to dissent from his eulogist.

As we have said before, it is the defence which provokes the attack. Newton, with the weak points exposed and unprotected, is not and cannot be an object of assault; our blow is on the shield which the biographers attempt to hold before him.

All Newton's faults were those of a temperament which observers of the human mind know to be incapable of alteration, though strong self-control may suppress its effects. The jealous, the suspicious nature is a part of the man's essence: when it exists at all, it is

no local sore, but a plague in the blood. Think of this morbid feeling as the constant attendant of the whole life, and then say, putting all Newton's known exhibitions of it at their very worst, how much they will amount to, as scattered through twenty years of controversy with his equals, and thirty years of kingly power over those who delighted to call themselves his inferiors. Newton's period of living fame is longer than that of Wellington: it is easy to talk of sixty years, but think of the time between 1795 and 1855, and we form a better image of the duration. In all this life, we know of some cases in which the worse nature conquered the better: in how many cases did victory—that victory which itself conceals the battle—declare for the right side? Scott claims this allowance even for Napoleon; how much more may it be asked for Newton? But it can only be asked by a biographer who has done for the opponents of his hero what he desires that his readers should do for the hero himself. When once the necessary admissions are made, so soon as it can be done on a basis which compromises no truth, and affords no example, we look on the errors of great men as straws preserved in the pure amber of their services to mankind. If we could but know the real history of a flaw in a diamond, we might be made aware that it was a necessary result of the combination of circumstances which determined that the product should be a diamond, and not a bit of rotten wood. Let a flaw be a flaw, because it is a flaw; Newton is not the less Newton, and without the smallest rebellion against

Locke's maxim, Whatever is, is—'*nobis gratulamur tale tantumque extitisse humani generis decus.*'

It is very much to be wished that the Portsmouth papers should undergo a full examination by more than one person, and on more than one side of all questions. Sir D. Brewster has very candidly stated several results derived from these papers, which oblige him to surrender several of his old views. Of his fairness on clear questions I have no doubt, as well as of his good intent on all. But I do not trust him to see the bearing of incidental remarks on points not immediately belonging to the document before him; and, if I did, I should take it as most likely that many casual phrases would carry different purport to different minds. A full examination will come in time: the only question is how and when. Dr. Horsley had the first opportunity; and it is pretty well known that he advised much suppression; he could not endure the publication of papers which would prove Newton to be Anti-Athanasian in his theology. More than one person was afterwards allowed to inspect the papers; but for a long time the head of the Portsmouth family was incapable of attention to business, and his substitutes, with proper feeling on the matter, declined to take the full power of ownership. When this state of things ceased, Sir D. Brewster was allowed, not merely to examine the papers, but to examine them at deliberate leisure in his own house. This was very liberal allowance; and I, for one, should have shrunk from advising it, and hope it will never be

conceded a second time. Risks of fire, of transit, of sudden accident to the sole custodian, etc., are severally formidable and collectively perilous. What I should like to see would be, first, an offer from the Government to print all that should be recommended for printing by a competent committee, that is by 'a numerous committee of gentlemen of different opinions;' secondly, that all the papers should be confided to the care of the Royal Society, which should name the committee, all examination taking place at the apartments of the Society, and the papers being deposited in fireproof boxes when not actually under inspection; thirdly, that *all* should be copied as a first step, and that all not judged desirable to be printed should be finally bound up with the part used as copy for the printer, and preserved by the Society; fourthly, that, the unprinted part being properly described and paged, the index of the printed book should be a very good index to the whole; fifthly, that a good abstract of the unprinted part should be added to the printed work.

In all the cases in which two great men of past time are shown in controversy with each other, the mass of the world run to the spectacle as to a fight between two little boys in the street, without any interest in the right or wrong of the matter, or in the way in which the truth of the result may help the history of knowledge. To most of the spectators may be addressed the reproof of Eliab: 'I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.' When the Life of Flamsteed

appeared, the following was the first impression of a reader in a distant country, whose name must be withheld: 'I am sorry to see that the matter seems to be taken up as "Newton *versus* Flamsteed:" as if any good were to be done, or any pleasure to be derived, by setting up two eminent characters to be knocked against one another, for the mere sake of trying how much damage they will sustain in the collision! It reminds me of Jack Tar's mode of trying the relative goodness of his own and messmate's watches.' I hope the future examiners of Newton's papers will not let slip what ought to be promulgated, merely because it suggests neither Flamsteed, nor Leibnitz, nor Hooke, nor Whiston, nor anything but Newton's mind and its progress.

The friend who wrote the above opinion on the publication of the quarrel was guided, I think, by his feelings; and by the feelings of the imagination, not those of the moral sense. It is not we who knock the two great men together: it is they who knocked themselves. And the damage which their characters *finally* sustain, if any, is that which they ought to sustain: give us the truth of the matter and, whatever distortion of opinion may follow close upon the disclosure, reason will at last destroy prejudice, and make the whole occurrence a useful part of the history of the mind. It may be suspected that the unfortunate disposition to look on the weak points of the great with delighted curiosity, which lives in so many minds, is in great measure the reaction against that determination that

weaknesses, errors, and even crimes shall be suppressed, unduly extenuated, or defended, which has been so often evinced by biographers. This would be a long subject to write on: let biographers be just judges, and it will perhaps be seen that their readers, the jury, will find reasons for recommendation to mercy, and will acquit upon a tenable doubt.

It may further be noted that, sad as it must be felt to be, the quarrels of literature and science are very important preservers of biographical details. Sometimes it may be that a useful individual slips out of the biographical dictionary altogether, who would have been duly recorded if he had been engaged in a fight. I have been looking far and wide for some account of Thomas Street, the author of the celebrated astronomical tables of 1661, which he called *Caroline*. He may be a relative of Sir Thomas Street, his contemporary, whose fame as a man and a judge, the readers of Macaulay will remember, caused him to be disowned by his relatives, of whom perhaps the astronomer was one. But I cannot ascertain when he was born or died, except by presumptive inference from works under his name appearing in 1661—1681. He was known to Flamsteed, and Wallis was at one time afraid that he would be assailed by Flamsteed (Maccles. Correspondence). Had there been a quarrel, the points of his biography would have been remembered. If he disarmed Flamsteed, by gentle measures, it was to his loss; the meek may inherit the earth, but the earth does not inherit the meek.

I cannot believe that the astronomer and the judge

are one and the same person. The pursuits are not necessarily incompatible; and Sir Matthew Hale was so busy with scientific treatises during his life, that the famous *Pleas of the Crown*, etc., were posthumous. But I cannot find a single presumption either for the identity or, any special ground, against it.

I may notice a little matter which has never been mentioned. In 1813 was sold at Sotheby's a library, which was announced as that of Newton; the seller was a Mrs. Anne Newton. It seems to have excited no curiosity, and 1400 lots sold for £500. That the auctioneers thought nothing of the matter is clear from their mixing up, and indistinguishably, this library of Newton with that of Tycho Wing, the son of Vincent Wing, both noted almanack-makers. It is clear from dates of the books in the sale catalogue which I have examined, that by far the greater part of the books, of all kinds, must have belonged to Wing. It also appears that the purchasers were all booksellers: a sale which was believed to be of Newton's books would, in 1813, have drawn the bibliomaniacs together like vultures to a carcase. It would seem that the auctioneers, bound to take their client's account of the library, used every justifiable means of taking care not to hurt their own literary characters by identifying themselves with the statement. Nevertheless, there is fair reason to suppose that some hundreds of the books had actually belonged to Newton. From Dr. Stukeley's account it appears that two or three hundred books which belonged to the Rev. Barnabas Smith, Newton's stepfather, were

given by Newton to Dr. Humphrey Newton, of Grantham, who had been his amanuensis. This explains how these books, Newton's by inheritance and not by use, remained in the name of Newton, instead of going with the manuscripts, etc., to Mrs. Conduitt. It must be added that many of Newton's own books must have been sold. The Portsmouth collection contains some volumes, but not a library; and books are about the world with Newton's signature, known to have been in them before the time at which forgeries commenced.

There are two matters connected with Newton mentioned by Whiston, in what he calls his memoirs of Dr. Clark, and what others perhaps will call that prelibation of his own biography, which it pleased him to print as memoirs of his friend. The first is Newton's implied agreement with Whiston's opinion that Bentley, Bishop Hare, and others, being clergymen, were wrong in entering into controversy about classical literature. According to Whiston, Newton said of the dispute about Terence, that they were 'fighting with one another about a play-book.' But if classical literature is to hold that place in education which, fortunately, it still holds in England, clergymen, with whose other duties it does not clash, are well employed upon distinguishing truth from falsehood in that field. The other matter is as follows, in Whiston's words:

'A.D. 1727, upon the death of Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Clarke was offered by the Court the place he possessed of Master of the Mint, worth, *communibus annis*, £1,200 to £1,500 a year. Upon this offer the doctor advised with his friends, and particularly with Mr.

Emlyn and myself, about accepting or refusing it. We were both heartily against his acceptance, as what he wanted not, as what was entirely remote from his profession, and would hinder the success of his ministry [it is implied that resignation of cure of souls was not contemplated.]. . .

Whereupon, after no small consideration, he absolutely refused it. Nor do I give credit to those surmises, as if Mr. Conduitt, who succeeded, was obliged to give the doctor, privately, an annual share of his profits, or what was equivalent thereto; with this only abatement, that Mr. Conduitt did actually give £1000 to void a place among the king's writers, which place was freely bestowed on a son of the Doctor's, who could not otherwise be so well provided for, after himself had refused the former much greater place. . . And as for the Doctor's refusal of the former improper preferment, though entirely omitted by Dr. Sykes, and almost entirely by Bishop Hoadley I take it to be one of the most glorious actions of his life. . . .'

This story is seldom mentioned, it is in the *Biographie Universelle;* but as Hoadley has alluded to it, there must be in it more than would of necessity be inferred from Whiston's gossip. This story runs through the biographies of Clarke, but it is not mentioned in those of Newton. Samuel Clarke, the third—for there are two in biography before him, not relatives—must have been a very marked character. He died in May, 1729, and 1730 saw the second edition of Whiston's supplement to the previous accounts of Sykes and Hoadley. This is illustrative of the interest excited by those biographical works and pamphlets which preceded the day of journal obituaries, and it may give a notion of Pittis's account of Halifax not being obscure or neglected, but commanding wide attention and provoking much remark.

The name of Newton, with reference to his discoveries, has been brought before the public in my day in two

very remarkable but very different ways: which is the most important I know; which is the most curious I do not know. The first is the great feat of Leverrier and Adams, the solution of the inverse problem of gravitation: Newton's problem was, Given the planet, to find its disturbing effects upon the motion of another planet, applied chiefly to the action of the Sun upon the Moon; the inverse problem is, Given the disturbing effect of a planet, to find the planet itself, applied to the detection of Neptune by its effect upon Uranus. Two names of first-rate eminence were inscribed on the roll of astronomers by this unlooked-for success. In the years preceding, astronomers had rather given over expecting anything very great in the future: they were inclined to think that nothing was left except to give the existing methods and results additional fulness and accuracy, facility and neatness. Schwabe's discovery of the periodic character of the solar spots in 1843, and Hencke's discovery of Astræa in 1845, were the dawn of a day, the bright sunrise of which was seen in the discovery of Neptune in 1846. Since that time astronomy has progressed with a speed unknown before; and no more is heard about the mine having been worked out.

The second matter is the shower of forged letters which was poured on the world in 1867, in perfect good faith, by M. Michel Chasles. Here we have proof—that is, plasmatographic proof, as the Greeks would say—that Pascal discovered gravitation; that Newton and Newton's mother were in communication with Pascal

when Newton was a boy; that Louis XIV. and James II. (the exile) were much interested in the matter; that James II. wrote very friendly French letters to Newton, who had shortly before voted for his deposition in Parliament, which Newton answered in the same language; and hundreds of things as good or better.

The play is not yet played out: for a publication of the whole is promised, with additional letters and proofs, But the promulgator still refuses to say whence he got the papers, though he seems to have four thousand letters, or thereabouts. In England it is hardly necessary to say, that the whole collection was scouted from the beginning. Pascal's remark on the cup of coffee, clearly made before coffee was known in France, and speaking as of a common phenomenon, first put us on our guard. But when *Hannah* Smith, by first marriage Newton, by birth Ayscough, appeared as *signing* her letters 'Miss Anne Ayscough Newton,' all was up in England; though a few still thought the matter worthy of serious argument. This was perhaps a concession to the French, who cannot learn our phrases of address. But it was not wanted; for the bulk of the educated French, especially the men of science, turned away the moment it was clear that M. Michel Chasles would not give up his authorities. In vain was it represented that they were allying themselves with England against French science: in vain did the official journal of the forgeries exclaim, 'Hélas! toute ardeur scientifique est morte parmi nous; tout feu sacré est éteint!' From the beginning it was believed on this side of the

Channel that it would be so; but it is clear that a very small party believed that national feeling would carry the bulk of the French nation all lengths whatsoever; that is a very small *French* party.

It is much to be wished that the French, for their own protection, would learn the use of the English terms of address. A few minutes' study of a few phrases would serve the purpose. With such a help, their dramatists would not have introduced Queen Caroline on the stage, accompanied by *Sir* Brougham and *Sir* Denman, and Miss Anne Ayscough Newton would have taken some possible form. Many Frenchmen will hardly believe that no Englishman would confidently say, at least without deliberate thought—which he holds to be most absurdly unlikely—such a signature as the above from Mrs. Barnabas Smith of North Witham, or such a signature as the following from Laplace, 'M. le Marquis Pierre-Simon Laplace, grand géomètre, qui n'aime pas les prêtres.* Thinking of this attempt to upset the history of science by a rocket-battery of fictitious letters, I feel particularly glad that the composer had not knowledge enough of the minor life of Newton and his friends to give some information about Catherine Barton. A letter signed 'Miss Countess Catherine Bart Halifac' to one illustrious uncle, praying him, for his soul's sake, to repair the wrong he had done to Pascal, would have been very effective,

* It should be noted that the four misspellings in 'Anne Ascough' are found in Fontenelle's 'Éloge' of Newton—the biography which a Frenchman would naturally consult.

especially if it had turned up in company with letters about gravitation from another illustrious uncle, Jean Bart, showing that Catherine was a Frenchwoman, and leading to the inference that Newton was a Frenchman. This seems absurd; but if anyone had amused himself by supposing forgeries, and had concocted the most conspicuous half-hundred of those which have actually appeared, adding the one which I have just supposed, I fancy that the additional one might be taken as just a little more *incongruous* than a dozen of the fifty, and that is all; but not more improbable. The above story, Jean Bart and all, is not so unlikely as that Pascal should have written in his private letters long passages, word for word, from the writings of persons who were not born until long after his own death, and who wrote different styles in a French which was not of the time of Pascal, aud not the least like his writing.

It is time to bring this matter to an end. The diffusion of the main story will, I hope, extricate evidence of various kinds from the holes in which it lies hidden.

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THE END.

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